

ANAMBRA STATE GOVERNMENT AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, 1976-1991: AN APPRAISAL

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Abstract

Agriculture plays a vital role in the growth of the economy of states in Nigeria. Consequently, each state initiates programmes that would foster agricultural production. This paper describes and analyzes the Anambra State government's engagements in agriculture during the period 1976-1991 and by so doing appraise the extent the efforts contributed to the growth of agriculture and demonstrate how sustainable the growth was. This is informed by the motley of projects the government established in this regard, the financial and human resources injected into them and the publicity they received. Much as this is a subject of interest, scholarly attention on it appears rather tenuous. This paper sets out to address this neglect. Data for the paper are derived from primary and secondary sources. They are presented chronologically and analytically. The paper combines qualitative and quantitative methods of research. It does not align the analysis to theoretical constructs, but uses available data to substantiate the thrust of its argument. On the strength of available evidence, it contends that the government's engagements in agriculture lacked sustainability and their effects tended to fade away with the administration that initiated them. It is so much so that virtually all the projects are presently ghosts of their former selves as they are desolate and in ruination.

Key Words: Agricultural Programmes, Agricultural Production, Appraisal, Growth, Sustainability, Anambra State, Nigeria

Introduction

The role of agriculture in the economy of states in the Nigerian federation can hardly be overstated. It provides employment for the rural dwellers who constitute the majority of the states' population. Besides contributing to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), addressing food security, which constitutes a threat to the entire population, agriculture could stem rural-urban drift, resolve the attendant social predicaments in the cities and make the rural areas livable.¹ State governments, therefore, consider agricultural production a key component of state policy. To this effect, they established programmes that would boost agricultural production. There is the need to describe and analyze these programmes with a view to ascertain the extent to which they individually and collectively achieved their goals and, by so doing, establish their sustainability. This paper undertakes this task with respect to Anambra State, Nigeria, during the period, 1976-1991. The time scope of the paper is predicated on the period the 'Old Anambra State', our study area existed.

To do justice to this task, this paper is organized into four sections. Each of these provides detailed information relevant to the paper. The first is the introduction which provides the background to the paper. The second gives a geo-political sketch of the study area. The third discusses the government's involvement in agricultural production in the study area before 1976, the departure year of the study. This would enable us to appreciate the state of agriculture at the take-off of the paper. The fourth section is chronological in approach, covering the periods, 1976-1983 and 1984-1991. The timelines of each period derives from the intensity of the government's effort towards increasing agricultural production. The fifth section provides the concluding remarks.

¹ Ikenna Odife, "An Appraisal of Rural Development in Anambra State, Nigeria, 1976-1991," Ph.D Thesis, Department of History and International Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), 2021.

Anambra State: A Geo-political Setting

The geo-political setting of Anambra State has been eminently discussed elsewhere by this writer,² as such, does not deserve a rehash here. But suffice it to state that it was part of the defunct Eastern Region, Eastern Nigeria and East Central State of Nigeria. In fact, it was carved out of East Central State during the 1976 state creation exercise. It was one of the states in the 19, later 21 states structure in the Nigerian Federation. It was split into Enugu and Anambra States during the 1991 state creation exercise. Therefore, the Anambra State of this study was that state in the Nigerian federation which existed with that name in the period 1976-1991.

Government and Agricultural Production before 1976

The government's attempt to improve agriculture in a more coordinated form in Nigeria dates to the Ten Year (1946-56) Development Plan which allocated £1,823.7 for this purpose.³ The government of the Eastern Region used its allocation of this fund in the area of Anambra State in the provision of extension services with focus on inculcating in farmers the use of agro-service materials such as fertilizer and the introduction of new crops, particularly rice. It also introduced the Tree Crop Plantation Scheme. In the Scheme, the government acquired communal land and hired labour to develop the plantations. The tree crops cultivated were oil palm, cocoa, rubber and cashew. In our study area the government established the oil palm plantation, Ugwuoba/Inyi and that of cashew at Oghe. The establishment of the cashew plantation popularized the crop in the neighbourhood and even distant communities where, it was in addition, used for the control of erosion menace.⁴

From the early 1960s, changes in socio-economic trends impelled a major shift in agricultural policies and programmes. The government of Eastern Nigeria began to intervene directly in agricultural production. It then adopted the Farm Settlement and the Oil palm Rehabilitation Schemes. It also established government farms, four of which, namely; Ugwuoba, Nkwelle Ezunaka, Ezillo (livestock) and Abakaliki, were in our study area.⁵

The Farm Settlement Scheme was the government's most ambitious effort in the transformation of the agricultural sector. It represents an attempt to raise agricultural productivity through the resettlement, training, supervision, assistance to farmers and to impart to them new techniques of cropping. It was also hoped that the Settlements would demonstrate that farming could be an honourable and profitable occupation and so help to reduce the flow of labour from the rural areas to the cities.⁶

It was inspired by Israel's Moshavin Scheme, which was used to settle Israelis returning to their homeland from different countries in Europe and America. The government, through the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation (ENDC) established settlements in each of its administrative provinces. Each settlement was designed to have over 120 settlers and averaged 2,000 acres in size. Individual holdings ranged between 15 and 20 acres depending upon whether the commercial crop grown was rice, oil palm, cocoa, citrus, rubber, or a combination of these. Each settler was also given parcels of land to plant arable or home food crops to meet family needs. The government furnished roads, community facilities such as schools, health centre, markets, water scheme and housing at the Settlements.⁷ The Ministry of Agriculture accepted adults with some farm background, preferably with

² Ikenna Odife "Was there light at the end of the tunnel? Interrogating Rural Healthcare Delivery in Anambra State, Nigeria, 1976-1991," *Ohazurume: Unizik Journal of Culture and Civilization*, Vol. 1 No. 1, (2022): 2.

³ P.N.C. Okigbo, *National Development Planning in Nigeria*, (London: James Currey, 1989), 80.

⁴ Eastern Region of Nigeria (ERN), *Eastern Region Development Programme, 1955-1960*, (Enugu; Government Printer, 1955), 18, in Box 70 National Achieves, Enugu (NAE)

⁵ Eastern Nigeria (EN) *Eastern Nigeria Development Plan, 1962-1968*, Official Document No. 8 of 1962, 73, in Box 72, NAE.

⁶ See: Barry Floyd and Monica Adinde "Farm Settlements in Eastern Nigeria; A Geographical Appraisal," *Economic Geography*, XLII (July 1967): 210; O.N. Njoku, *Economic History of Nigeria, 19th – 21st Centuries 2nd Edition*, (Nsukka: Great AP Express 2014), 300.

⁷ Floyd and Adinde, "Farm Settlement, 211; Njoku, *Economic History*, 301.

experience on plantations into the scheme, instead of school leavers who had limited or no farming background as was the case with Western Nigeria.⁸ In the area of Anambra State, Settlements were established at Igbariam in Onitsha Province and Uzo-Uwani, Enugu Province. The Uzo-Uwani settlement was devoted to irrigated rice cultivation and the growing of onions, while the Igbariam settlement was for cassava, citrus, and oil palm.⁹

Another agricultural programme of the period was the Oil Palm Rehabilitation Scheme. The target group of this scheme was the individual farmers. It entailed the replacement of the self-seeded and wild oil palm trees with the improved seedlings procured by the government from the Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR), Benin. Under the scheme, farmers were given the seedlings of the improved variety plus fertilizers free of charge. Since the scheme was originally conceived as a means of rehabilitating existing wild palm groves, a subsidy of £10 per acre was paid to farmers as an incentive to cut down old wild palm trees and plant the improved variety as well as assist farmers during the gestation period of the new palm. Land planted under this scheme that did not previously have oil palm trees growing on it also received the subsidy. The subsidy was to ensure that proper agricultural practices were followed since it could be withdrawn if the oil palm trees were not planted and cared for according to the manner prescribed by the ministry. The monetary incentive was also an enticement to those farmers who previously had no palm trees on the land to participate in the programme. Such was a big boost and attraction to lure people participate to the programme¹⁰

In addition to the programme for increased production of tree crops for the export market, the Ministry of Agriculture also engaged in various crop production campaigns related to locally consumed food crops. Improved cassava and rice varieties were distributed to peasant producers and efforts were made to improve water control in rice production through government-subsidized small-scale irrigation schemes. Furthermore, a campaign for increased planting of vegetables was mounted. This was championed by the Market Garden Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, which supplied different varieties of vegetable seeds to the public. Various methods of plant protection were introduced to farmers on a trial basis. It also mounted an extension programme to impart to farmers the application of fertilizers on cassava, maize, yams and oil palms and supplied it to them at a subsidized rate.¹¹

Over time, the doubt over their sustainability impelled the government to revisit the programmes and schemes. In the case of the farm settlements, the cost per settler was so high that the government's development resources could only include a small portion of the farming population. Moreover, concerns about the economic viability of the programme, particularly on whether it could pay the cost of its establishment began to emerge. With respect to the oil palm rehabilitation scheme, the principal shortcoming was that participation was confined to a few farmers. This was due, in part, to the difficulty the government had in providing technical supervision as well as the planting materials and fertilizer that were required. A more limiting factor was the government requirement that a farmer had to devote a minimum of five acres of land in one piece before he was allowed to participate. This was difficult to achieve going by the fragmentary land-holding nature of the land tenure system of the people.¹²

Alongside the growing realization that assistance needed to be directed at small-holder farmers, the government undertook a reassessment of its economic development programme. By 1963, the government established the Community Plantation Scheme. In this scheme, plans were devised for the villagers to establish community-based agricultural projects which, it was hoped, would increase the level of income within the village and from which funds could be raised for the maintenance of

⁸ G.K. Helleiner, *Peasant Agriculture, Government and Economic Growth in Nigeria*, (Homewood 11, Illinois: Richard D. Irvin, 1966), 344.

⁹ Floyd and Adinde, "Farm Settlement, 211, Njoku, *Economic History*, 301.

¹⁰ D.R. Smock and A.C. Smock, *Cultural and Political Aspects of Record Transformation: A case study of Eastern Nigeria*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 190.

¹¹ Smock and Smock, *Cultural and Political*, 192

¹² Njoku, *Economic History*, 301.

community projects. The villagers decided the crops to be planted, which in the area of Anambra State was chiefly oil palm, to a lesser extent, cashew and cocoa. The participating community donated land for this purpose. The government provided extension services to impart to the villagers the appropriate farming techniques and provide them with agro-service materials. Cash subsidy was provided during the gestation period of the tree crops. The advantages of the scheme were cost reduction for the government in providing matching grants for community development projects and increased direct participation of the peasant farmers in agricultural production. This scheme, as popular as it seemed, did not appear to enjoy widespread acceptance across Eastern Nigeria. In the area of 'Anambra State', there were only 27 of such community farms before the outbreak of the Nigeria-Biafra War in 1967.¹³

No sooner had the crops under the various schemes begun to bear fruit than the Nigeria-Biafra War broke out in 1967. In fact, most crops in the programmes were still in the gestation period. It would be right to state that the agricultural programmes of the defunct Eastern Nigerian government, initiated in its Development Plan, 1962-1968, did not achieve the expected goals. The crises that engulfed the country with the 1966 military *coup d'état* and the subsequent outbreak of the Nigeria-Biafra war not only distorted the Eastern Nigerian plan in agriculture but truncated the agricultural schemes.¹⁴

At the end of the war, the overall economy of East Central State was battered. The whole agricultural schemes was in shambles. Paucity of funds stunted government's will on reconstruction work on agriculture.¹⁵ It could not, for instance, provide financial and moral support for those settlers who returned to the settlements to revive their farms. Or, it would appear that the government showed little interest in continuing the scheme. Owing to this neglect, the settlers found it difficult to continue. By 1975, the Uzo-Uwani farm settlement had practically ceased to exist,¹⁶ while that at Igbariam continued with skeletal activities.¹⁷

Between 1970 and 1972, the government introduced organizational changes in the agricultural sector that gave birth to the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC). A further re-organization led to the creation of the Agricultural Development Authority (ADA) in 1973, with greater mandate and scope to improve the agricultural sector.¹⁸ The farm settlements and government farms came under the supervision of the Authority. It embarked on schemes and projects for the rehabilitation of the oil palm trees and food crop development such as seed multiplication, and acquisition of improved species of cassava stems, among others. But lack of funds, as already noted, was a major limiting factor. However, a modicum of achievement was recorded. Seven of the community farms were revived and used by the government as demonstration farms. In addition, communities were encouraged to embark on projects that would induce economic activities and, in turn, expand prospects for increased earnings for rural dwellers. This would also enable them to finance their welfare needs. The agricultural projects included cash crop farming which in the area of Anambra State were the oil palm tree and cashew, food crop farming, poultry and other livestock projects. This was done under the Community/Cooperative farm project supervised by the Community Development Division.¹⁹

It could be seen from the foregoing analysis that agricultural production was a subject of interest to the government before the creation of Anambra State in 1976. This could be gleaned from the programmes

¹³ Smock and Smock, *Cultural and Political*, 192.

¹⁴ Ikenna Odife "Appraisal of Rural, 98.

¹⁵ Smock and Smock, *Cultural and Political*, 206.

¹⁶ Caleb O. Okoro "Uzo-Uwani Farm Settlement and Socio-Economic Development of Anambra Basin, 1961-1971," MA Thesis, Department of History, UNN, (1986): 48

¹⁷ Edwin Uyaemezinaa, 72yrs, Rtd Civil Servant and Community Leader, Nando, Oyi Local Government Area (LGA), interviewed at Awka on 3rd March, 2018.

¹⁸ See: East Central State (ECS), Agricultural Development Corporation Edict, Edict No. 18 of 1970, and ECS, Agricultural Development Authority Edict, Edict No. 3 of 1973.

¹⁹ ECS, "Three years after the Civil War," Official Document No. 6 of 1974, 12 in Box 72, NAE.

government initiated for the purpose. A perceptive examination of these would reveal that they were a mixed-grill of failures and successes. For instance, the farm settlement scheme was a gross failure, while tree crop and food crop development recorded marginal successes.

Anambra State Government's Agricultural Programmes, 1976-1991

This section of the paper discusses the government's involvement in agriculture within the time frame of this paper. The time frame could be delineated into periods 1976-1983 and 1984-1991. The timeline of this demarcation is predicated upon the varying intensity of government involvement in agriculture and the nature of the administration of the state.

The 1976-1983 Period

Anambra State was under two types of administration during this period, namely, the era of military administration, 1976-1979 and that of civilian/democratic administration, October 1st 1979-31st December, 1983. Each tended to introduce unique programmes. For instance, the government in the latter era was more inclined towards populist programmes so as to attract support and acceptance from the electorate. There was, also, the impact of party political alignment and the running gauntlet between the state and federal government. These had a significant impact on agricultural programmes of the era.

The state military government initiated a number of programmes and policies aimed at increasing agricultural production. It inherited the agricultural projects, programmes and schemes of the defunct East Central State located in its area. These include the Uzo-Uwani and Igbariam Farm Settlements, Ugwuoba, Nkwelle-Ezunaka, Ezillo (livestock) and Abakaliki Government farms, seven community farms located at Iboko, Mbu/Nike, Ufuma, Achi, Ishiagu/Umuawulu, Enugu-Ezike and Okofia/Idembia and the market garden at Enugu. Others were the Tree crops Development Programme, Food Crop Production Scheme, Seed Multiplication Scheme, Fertilizer Distribution Programme and Agricultural Extension Information. To effectively coordinate its agricultural programmes, the military administration of the state established the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC). The Corporation, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR), managed and implemented government agricultural programmes and projects. The ADC supervised the following projects; maize/cassava; rice; Do-Anambra Rice, Niger flood Basin, Ugwuoba/Inyi and Ibite-Olo oil palm plantations; Cashew development and grains storage. The Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR), on the other hand, was saddled with the task of managing the following: Cashew Rehabilitation and Development Scheme, Fertilizer Promotion Programme, Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme, Soil Conservation and Reclamation Programme, Irrigation and Drainage Scheme (small-holder rice and maize development); Food Crop Development: Seed Multiplication and Improvement Scheme, Horticulture Development, Oil palm Rehabilitation (General Farmer Participation) project. Small-holder Rubber Plantation Scheme, Cocoa Improvement Scheme, Agricultural Extension Information, Agro-meteorological Services and the establishment of demonstration farms. Others include; Farm centres and schools, livestock projects and fishery projects. Unfortunately, the government seemed to abandon the Farm Settlements.²⁰

It is difficult to assess the performance of the various schemes due to the unavailability of data. To proffer informed surmises on their activities, recourse was made, in this paper, on government's actual expenditure on the projects between 1976 and 1978 in its Annual Estimates and the scanty and patchy oral information.

Below is the Actual Expenditure on the projects of the ADC (1976-1978)

²⁰ Uyaamezina, interview cited; See Anambra State (ANS) Approval Estimates, 1976/77 – 1978/79

Table 1: Actual Expenditure on the projects of the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) 1976-1978

Project	₦
Maize/cassava project	333,000
Rice	480,000
Do- Anambra Rice	554,000
Niger-flood Basin Project	-
Ugwuoba/Inyi, oil palm plantation	630,000
Ibite-Olo oil palm plantation	660,000
Cashew development	64,000
Grain storage	-
Total	2,721,000

Source: Approved Estimates of Anambra State of Nigeria, 1979/80 Official Document No. 4 of 1979, 207

Below is the actual expenditure on the project and programmes of the MANR (1976-1978)

Table 2: Actual Expenditure on the projects and programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MANR) 1976-1978

Project/Programme	₦
Cashew Rehabilitation and Development	-
Fertilizer Promotion Programme	2,292,000
Fund for Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme (FSACS)	-
Soil conservation and reclamation	103,000
Irrigation and drainage scheme (Small-Holder Rice and Maize Development)	1,000,000
Food Crop Development: Seed multiplication and Improvement Scheme	819,000
Horticulture Development	84,000
Oil Palm Rehabilitation (General Farmer Participation Project)	461,000
Small- Holder Rubber Plantation Scheme	-
Cocoa Improvement Scheme	5,000
Agricultural Extension Information	75,000
Agro-Meteorological Services	40,000
Establishment of Demonstration Farm centres and schools	16,000
Total	4,895,000
Livestock project	98,000
Fishery project	60,000

Source: Anambra State of Nigeria, Approved Estimates 1979/80, Official Document No. 4 of 1979, 207-209

From the figures derived from the foregoing table, about ₦3.2m was expended on the entire food crop production programme, ₦2.3m on the fertilizer promotion programme. While ₦1.75m was expended on Oil Palm Programmes. A paltry ₦75,000 and ₦64,000 were expended on Agricultural Extension Information and Cashew development, respectively. Grain storage facilities, Small-holder Rubber plantations and the Fund for Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme (FSACS) received no funding.

An analysis of the figures shows that cash/export crop production received near zero attention. This could be attributed to the humongous revenue that accrued to the nation from petroleum exportation, which made most state governments abandon their cash crop development programmes. The state government's emphases lay most on food crop production, followed by fertilizer distribution. Both were closely related as fertilizer was a major input in food crop production. The majority of farmers in the state acknowledged the government's efforts to sensitize them on fertilizer application to crops, and the new varieties of crops – cassava, maize and rice of improved quality, resistant to diseases/pests and of

greater yield that were given to them. There was an increase in food crop production. The most reckoned was rice. It is rather unfortunate that government's agricultural programmes of the period 1976-1979 tended to be silent on yam and cocoyam production. Yet, they were staples in the people's diet. Their production is a testament to the ingenuity, doggedness and resilience of local farmers. Most of them became conversant with the use of fertilizers and insecticides especially the Aldrin dust used to combat of yam beetle. But it deserves to be stated that farmers in the flood plains of the Niger and Omambala Rivers reputed for yam cultivation rarely applied fertilizer on the crop. Its application was on such crops as cassava, rice and maize and for the vegetables- amaranthus, pumpkin, pepper and so on.²¹

The Civilian administration that came on board on 1st October 1979 had the massive production of food as its cardinal objective in agriculture. In this regard, it established the Ministry of Food Production (MFP), which supervised agricultural projects in the state. It repealed the ADC Edict and transferred its projects to the Ministry of Food Production.

The major component of the ministry was the Food for the People Programme (FPP). It was designed to ensure improved food supply by accelerating the rate of staple food production by farmers and agencies. This was done through:

- effective mobilization of the grassroots farming population and providing them with improved planting materials and other inputs;
- regular and effective supervision of farmers to ensure maximum use of inputs;
- the implementation of the following projects:-
 - Cassava/maize/yam production
 - Rice production
 - Community farms
 - Agro-service centres
 - Secondary School Farms
 - Fish production
 - Livestock, Poultry/Hatchery
 - Minor irrigation scheme
 - Seed multiplication
 - Rural produce storage
 - Veterinary clinical services²²

These programmes and schemes were rechristening, intensified activities on, and increased funding of the previous programmes and schemes. However, a recap of some these projects is germane.

The Cassava Programme

The government made available to farmers improved species of cassava stem. A major achievement of this period was the combat of the mealy-bug disease that threatened cassava farms in the state between 1981 and 1983. It purchased over 335,000 bundles of fit cassava stems, which it distributed to farmers across the state. Again, about 1.5 million bundles of cassava stick received pre-planting chemical treatment against mealy-bug. An estimated 306,600 farmers benefited from the chemical dipping exercise while 30,000 farm families were trained in integrated cassava mealy-bug control measures in 420 communities in the state.

To further eliminate traces of the disease during the dry season, the government spent the sum of ₦460,000 in mounting a 12-week intensive publicity campaign and foliar pesticide treatment for noticed re-infestation. By the 1983 farming season, it multiplied improved cassava cultivars in selected areas in the state so as to provide adequate ideal planting materials to farmers at the right time.²³

²¹ Uyaamezina, interviewed cited

²² Anambra State (ANS) *3rd Twelve months of civilian Administration of Anambra State*, (Enugu: Government Printer/Ministry of Information and Culture, 1983), 12.

²³ ANS, *3rd Twelve months*, 11.

Rice Improvement Programme:

The government incentives to farmers led to the cultivation of estimated 250,000 hectares of land with rice across the state in 1981. In subsequent years, it embarked on measures that encouraged farmers to adopt improved production techniques which increased their yield from 1.5 metric tons per hectare to between 3 and 5mt/ha. It mounted a programme to acquaint farmers with improved production techniques in which a total of 5,000 farmers from 14 local government areas participated.

Under the FPP Milled Rice Supply, about 949 metric tons of milled high-quality rice was sold to the public, while another 640 metric tons were stored as strategic reserves. The rice storage and distribution strategy substantially stabilized the price of rice and ensured increased earnings for farmers by eliminating market glut of the product during the harvest period. However, the programme did not appear to receive the required attention from the government in the 1983 farming year.²⁴ This may not be unconnected with the intense politicking that engulfed the state due to the general election and the strive by the state governor, Chief Jim Nwobodo, to be re-elected to office.

Food Crop and Seed Multiplication Project:

Through this project, the Ministry of Food Production used the most effective methods to multiply high-yielding, disease/pest-resistant varieties of the people's various food crops (maize, rice, cassava, yam and others) and distributed them to deserving farmers for increased production of food. Its efforts on cassava and rice had been noted. But it deserves to be added that 52.7 metric tons of rice consisting of nine improved swamp and upland varieties were distributed to farmers in the major rice belts of the state. In addition, over 27 metric tons of improved varieties of maize were distributed to farmers in all LGAs of the state. It further engaged in the multiplication of Bambara nut, groundnut, cowpea and selected yam varieties at the cost of ₦25,000, which it distributed to farmers up to the 1982 farming season.²⁵ However, not much appeared to be achieved in this respect in the 1983 farming season. It would seem that the state government was distracted by political campaigns for re-election into office.

Fertilizer Promotion Programme:

Farmers in the state had long embraced the application of fertilizer on crops from the previous programmes. The main concern of the government from 1980 was to ensure its adequate and timely supply. It therefore embarked on massive procurement and supply to meet the ever-increasing demand from farmers. The trend of fertilizer consumption in the state between 1979 and 1982 was as follows;

Table 3: The trend of fertilizer consumption in the state between 1979 and 1982

Year	Quantity consumed in metric tons
1979	6,198
1980	13,282
1981	20,416
1982	34,000
Total	73,896

Source: ANS, 3rd Twelve Months, 17

These figures show a steady increase in fertilizer supply and utilization in the state. However, this was not without some challenges. It is appalling that staff members of the government agencies charged with the responsibility of distributing/selling fertilizers to the farmers tended to hoard the product to create artificial scarcity, increase its price, and make illicit profit thereby. Again, the fertilizer distribution was used to settle political surrogates who, in turn, re-sold it to the farmers at inflated prizes.²⁶

²⁴ ANS, 3rd Twelve months, 13.

²⁵ ANS, 3rd Twelve months, 14.

²⁶ Uyaemezina, interviewed cited

Fish Production Project:

The project was designed to establish commercial fish farms in the state. Sites for the project were chosen at Adani, Aguleri and Oba. But work did not commence on these sites within this period of the study.

Livestock and Poultry/Hatchery Project

The state government had livestock farms at Adada and Ezilo in addition to poultry farms at Achi, Mgbakwu, Nkwelle-Ezunaka and Oghe. These were derelict due to neglect by the government. A one million naira hatchery project was established at Abakaliki by the civilian administration of the state. The hatchery was expected to sustain the rapidly expanding poultry project and farms in the state and reduce the dependence of supply of day-old-chicks from external sources.²⁷ However, it does seem the project could not serve the expected goal. There was no visible output from the project. Locals confirm that the hatchery was shut down for the greater part of 1983.²⁸

Community Farms

The government established six additional community farms, thereby raising the number to 13. In size, they ranged between 300ha to 1800ha. The ultimate goal of establishing the farms was to modernize agricultural production through land consolidation to allow for mechanization and application of improved techniques. This reduced land preparation cost to only 4 per cent of what it could ordinarily cost the farmers, using traditional manual labour. This arrangement facilitated the supply of inputs like seeds, fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides to the farmers right on the farms (*in situ*).

The land preparation services handled by the Agricultural Engineering Division of the Ministry of Food Production were hampered by the few tractors and equipment at its disposal and the lack of funds for their repair and maintenance. As most of the tractors were in unserviceable state, very little could be achieved.²⁹

Minor Irrigation and Drainage Scheme:

The state government entered a cooperation agreement with Korean technical partners to implement the minor irrigation schemes. After a state-wide feasibility study, it made proposals, recommendations as well as estimates for the construction of the minor irrigation, which commenced in the 1982 financial year. The Atamiri River in the proposed Osian Lake Basin Irrigation Project, Uli was cleared and installed with a gauge. Owing to lack of funds, construction work did not commence, but testing of relevant data was done.³⁰

The World Bank Rice Project

The World Bank Rice Project was a national project captured in the country's Third National Development Plan. It was funded by the federal government, state government and loans from the World Bank on a determined formula. It was organized in phases. Each phase was to last for five years. The first phase began in 1976 (mobilization year) and ended in 1981. The second phase commenced in 1983.

The first phase of the project was estimated to cost ₦14.1m in 1976. However, the amount was increased in 1979 to ₦28m because of the global inflationary trend. Up to 1981, the state had contributed ₦8.2m as part of her 37.5 per cent counterpart funding of the project. There were six locations of the project in its first phase.³¹ These locations and the number of participating farmers are presented hereunder.

²⁷ ANS, 3rd Twelve months, 17.

²⁸ Ikechukwu Nwiphoke, 58 years, Auto Panel Beater interviewed at Amaegu, Izzi on 16th April, 2012.

²⁹ ANS, 3rd Twelve months, 20.

³⁰ ANS, 3rd Twelve months, 21.

³¹ ANS, 3rd Twelve months, 21.

Table 4: The number and location of the Anambra-World Bank Rice Project and Number of Participating farmers

S/N	Location	No. of farmers
1	Uzo-Uwani	628
2	Ifite-Ogwari	476
3	Ogboji	476
4	Enugu Abo	448
5	Ikem-Nando	31
6	Item-Ikwo	408
	Total	2467

Source: ANS, 3RD Twelve Months, 21

In order to appreciate the impact of the first phase of the project on rural farmers and output of the programme, a comparison of performance between 1976 (mobilization year) and 1981 (terminal year) is made:

Table 5: Performance of the First Phase of the Anambra World Bank Rice Project, 1976 – 1981

S/N	Project	1976	1981
A	Swamp and upland rice cultivated	324ha	2003ha
B	No. of participating farmers	545	2467
C	Average yield	1.5tons	3.68 tons
D	No. of locations	3	6
E	Paddy rice produced	486 tons	7371 tons

Source: ANS, 3RD Twelve Months, 21

From the figures above, one could observe that there was quantum increase in output from all facets of the project. Most significantly, paddy production rose from 486 tons in 1976 to 7371 tons in 1981.

A sizeable quantity of paddy purchased from the project farmers were milled and sold by the FPP under the brand name, “ANIMO RICE” all over the country. The construction of a one ton-per-hour capacity integrated rice mill was initiated at Enugu-Abo, Ufuma to assist the re-activated one ton per hour capacity rice mill already in operation at Uzo-Uwani. (The Uzo-Uwani mill was established by the government of ECS under the ADA Rice Project).

The major problem of the first phase of the programme was payment of compensation for economic trees/crops to people whose land was acquired. Up to 1982, the project required about ₦2.5m to offset crop/tree compensation. Again, the government tended to neglect its agricultural projects in 1983. It was highly distracted by electioneering campaigns for the general elections of that year.³²

The second phase which formally took off in 1983, it was envisaged to improve upon the achievements of the first phase. The extent of achievement of the above goals will be put in perspective in the subsequent section of this paper.

Anambra State Agricultural Credit Scheme

The military administration of the state recognized the need to establish a credit scheme that could provide the funds needed to enable farmers to increase their output and improve the marketing strategies for their products. In this regard, it established the Fund for Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme (FSACS) in 1978. But Government funding of the scheme commenced in the 1979/80 financial year. With the advent of civilian administration in October 1979, the Edict was repealed by Anambra State Edict No.7 of 1981, which established the Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme (SACS).³³

³² Edwin Uyaemezina, Interviewed cited.

³³ ASN, Anambra State Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme Edict, Edict No. 7 of 1981.

The Scheme was expected to modernize agriculture, eliminate the financial constraints that hinder agricultural production and facilitate the adoption by farmers of improved technology through intensive supervision of farmers' holdings in the state. The main source of funds for the scheme was the annual subvention from the state government in its Annual Budget Estimates. Another source of funds was the loan advance from the on-lending scheme of the Nigerian Agricultural and Commerce Bank, (NACB). It, for instance, in 1980, advanced to the scheme the sum of ₦2.5m.

The considerations for farmers' eligibility for the loan were a good knowledge of the type of farm enterprise to undertake, evidence of ownership of a minimum of one hectare of land, and for the poultry farmer, a minimum of 100 birds was compulsory. Finally, the farmer must not default on tax payments. Credit was both in cash and kind. The scheme gave a minimum of ₦500 and a maximum of ₦10,000 to loan seekers at an interest rate of six per cent per annum. Credit in kind covered inputs like fertilizer and improved planting materials. Cash payments were in installments and always preceded by a satisfactory report of the proper application of the previous installment. Application form for the loan was obtained at the zonal agricultural offices at the cost of 10 naira. Field officers at the zones evaluated claims of the applicants. Reports on the viability of each application done at zonal offices by the field investigation officers were forwarded to the headquarters at Enugu, where the committee on the selection of applicants after a thorough study of the reports and screening of applications, chose the successful applicants. Each successful applicant was required to provide at least two persons acceptable to the committee to serve as guarantors.³⁴ C. J. Arene has conducted an in-depth and extensive study on the SACS. This study contains valuable data for the reconstruction of the activities and operations of the Scheme. Some of these are presented hereunder.

Table 6: Loan Applications to SACS in 1981

Zone	Applications			Total
	Approved	Not Approved	To be processed	
Abakaliki	132	37	-	169
Awka	65	41	-	106
Enugu	98	9	-	107
Nsukka	29	121	-	150
Onitsha	42	27	-	69
Total	366	235		601

Source: C. J. Arene, "Evaluation of the Performance of Supervised Agricultural Credit Scheme of Anambra State, Nigeria" Ph.D Thesis, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1990, 28.

As the table indicates, there were 601 applications for the loan from the five zones of the state. Three hundred and sixty-six of these applications were successful, while 235 were not approved. The total number of applicants for the loan in that year, 601, represents an infinitesimal number of farmers in the state. One could, therefore, argue that the impact of the loan on the overwhelming majority of farmers in the state in that year was very insignificant. This figure could be used to extrapolate the future. The performance of the loan scheme could further be appreciated by spotlighting the amount of loan issued to farmers and the refund situation.

Table 7: Total Amount of Loan Issued to Farmers and Refund Situation, 1980-1983

Zone	Year	No of farmers	Amount of loan ₦	Amount Repaid ₦	Balance ₦
Abakaliki	1980	26	86,509.25	66,850.00	19,659.25
	1981	132	499,501.25	156,638.00	342,862.35
	1982	176	475,078.86	69,115.52	405,963.34

³⁴ Arene, "Evaluation, 27.

	1983	None	None	None	None
Awka	1980	18	46,537.69	27,645.63	18,892.06
	1981	65	235,699.85	68,496.39	167,203.46
	1982	73	366,034.72	20,969.25	345,065.47
	1983	None	None	None	None
Enugu	1980	22	74,142.79	46,960.66	27,182.13
	1981	98	436,162.26	119,868.67	316,293.59
	1982	66	294,112.84	15,705.74	278,407.10
	1983	None	None	None	None
Nsukka	1980	36	100,823.70	42,256.48	58,558.22
	1981	29	86,208.85	30,411.49	55,797.36
	1982	94	238,267.48	14,394.09	223,873.39
	1983	None	None	None	None
Onitsha	1980	11	32,820.30	20,393.70	12,426.60
	1981	42	202,498.70	73,071.49	129,427.21
	1982	48	144,433.74	8,755.64	135,678.10
	1983	None	None	None	None
Total		936	3,318,832.28	781,542.65	2,537,489.63

Source: Extracted from, Table1.5 ‘Total Amount of loan issued to farmers and Refund, 1980-1987’ in Arene, “Evaluation, 9-11

The figures from this table show that only 936 farmers benefitted from the loan disbursement of the SACS, throughout the period, (1980-1983). As indicated in the analysis of the previous table, the rural/peasant farmers in the state seemed to be precluded from the loan scheme. The beneficiaries, most likely, were the “progressive” farmers. Furthermore, the disbursement of the loan appeared to be tainted with favouritism to the advantage of loyalists of the ruling party in the state, not necessarily on merit, as the intense politicking in the state at the period would reveal. Allied to this was the fact that more than 322 per cent of the loan was not repaid. A source indicates that government made only feeble attempts to compel defaulters to re-pay.³⁵ On the whole, ₦3,318,832.28 was disbursed to 936 farmers, and the amount repaid was a paltry ₦781,542.65, leaving a balance of ₦2,537,489.63. This situation, no doubt, affected the capacity of the Scheme to discharge its function and actualize its objectives.

From the forgoing analysis, it could be observed that the state government made strident efforts in the development of agriculture early in this period. However, this initial zeal began to fade from the last eighteen months of the period. Most of the projects suffered neglect. Again, projects were initiated not for their economic benefits but to serve political ends. This would seem to account for the projects that were still born.

The 1984-1991 Period

It is quite unfortunate that most of the state agricultural projects before this period were in abandonment. This was occasioned by their neglect by the administration of the time. It was in realization of the above that the government of the state, within this period, initiated a series of programmes in agricultural production. The government’s objectives in these respects were:

- to improve the living conditions of farmers and the rural populace in general, thereby stemming rural-urban drift;
- to create more rural employment opportunities in the state so as to absorb the ever increasing labour force of school, college and university graduates and retired officers;
- to increase the quantity of stable food available for local consumption;
- to increase the quantity of agro-based materials available to the local industries;

³⁵Uyaamezina, Interview cited

- to increase the production and processing of export crops, especially tree crops with a view to broadening the revenue base of the state; and
- popularize agriculture as a way of life.

Measures the government adopted to achieve these objectives were;

- to expand agricultural extension services so as to reach the majority of farmers in the state;
- to encourage medium and large-scale investment in agriculture, especially in the rural areas: communities that have arable farmland were organized to own community farms as co-operative ventures; others without arable land were encouraged to establish livestock or fish farms and
- to provide viable small-scale loan scheme for rural farmers.³⁶

By way of incentive to farmers, government did its possible best to make fertilizer and other farm inputs available to farmers at subsidized prices and at the right time. In some cases, government cleared and ploughed farmlands and allotted the plots to groups of well-organized youths and other community farmers; and the payment for all inputs were on deferred credit basis. The programmes adopted by the government to achieve these objectives were:

- The Agricultural Development Programme
- Agricultural Mechanization through Anambra State Tractor Hire Service (ASTRAC)
- Private sector participation in agriculture
- Increased input supply/distribution to farmers
- Accelerated seed yam multiplication programme, (minisett) yam production technique.
- Food and Tree Crop Production Programme.
- Increased emphasis on fisheries, livestock, veterinary and forestry subsectors
- Food Crop Protection Programme.

The machineries for the execution of these programmes were;

- The State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
- The State Ministry of Local Government and the Twenty-three, later Twenty-nine local governments in the state.
- Anambra State Forestry Commission.
- The Anambra-Imo River Basin Development Authority (AIRBDA) and other Federal Government agricultural agencies and institutions in the state; especially the Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI).
- The Task Forces in the field of Agriculture were:
 - Task Force on Rice Production
 - Task Force on food processing, preservation and storage.
 - Task Force on soil erosion control.³⁷

Having highlighted the objectives, strategies and schemes for the development of the agricultural sector of the state's economy, it is pertinent to discuss the achievements recorded in these respects.

Anambra State Tractor Hiring Service (ASTRAC)

This service was aimed at the use of tractors in clearing private, community and government farms. The government purchased eighty tractors for this purpose in 1985. Recall that before this period most of the state-owned tractors were in an unserviceable state. These newly acquired tractors assisted small-scale farmers throughout the state in mechanized plowing, ridging and harvesting of substantial hectares of land which otherwise would not have been brought under cultivation. To make these tractors easily reachable to the farmers at the grassroots, the government established tractor-hiring units in all local

³⁶ ASN, *Blueprint on Rural Development in Anambra State*, Official Document No. 4 of 1987, 4.

³⁷ ASN, *Focus on Rural Development in Anambra State*, Vol. 1, (Enugu: Directorate of Rural Development, Government House and Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs), 1986, 6.

government headquarters in the state.³⁸ The tractors, no doubt, increased the land cultivated and the output from agriculture. But the peasant/ruler farmer was naturally precluded from its services. The chief reason was that the fragmentary land-holding system in which the peasant farmer owned a small piece of land in each location made the use of tractors untenable. Moreover, the use of tractors was not feasible in the traditional farm plots which were intensely dotted with oil palm and other economic trees. Tractors could not be deployed to such farms without first felling most of the oil palm and economic trees. The rural farmers were not inclined to acquiesce to this as the palm trees and other tree crops in such farms were invaluable to them.



Plate 1: A cross-section of the 80 tractors acquired by Government for the State Tractor Hiring Service, (ASTRAC)

Source: ANS, *Development Projects*, 1987, 8

From the foregoing, it would appear that the tractors were deployed to government farms, demonstration farms and farms owned by the progressive farmers, with little direct benefit to the peasant/rural farmers.

Agricultural Development Programme (ADP)

The Agricultural Development Programme was jointly sponsored by the federal government, state government and assistance from the World Bank. It was launched in August 1985 and commenced full operation in the 1986 farming season. Its activities were concentrated on extension work, on-farm adaptive research, seed and fertilizer distribution, feeder roads construction, provision of potable water, surveys and manpower development.

The ADP, in 1988, built warehouses (Agro-service centres) in the then 23 local government areas for the storage of its agro-service materials. The warehouses facilitated the preservation of such materials and brought them within the reach of the rural farmers. However, the World Bank contribution to the programme came in piecemeal and in tranches. The major tranche which included various equipment, project vehicles and motorcycles was delivered to the state in 1990. It was also in that year that ADP engaged most of its field workers.



³⁸ ANS, *Development Programmes and Projects*, (Enugu: Government Printer, 1987), 8.

Plate 2: The ADP (Agro-service centre) Warehouse, Onueke. Each of these was constructed in the then 23 LGA Headquarters in the State

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 16th April, 2012

These equipment were barely put to use and the personnel took up their responsibilities before the split of Anambra State into Enugu and Anambra States and the terminus of this paper. These project vehicles attracted the attention of state officials who expropriated them for purposes other than those for which they were meant. This remained the major impediment to the attainment of the objectives of the programme. However, extension services were intensified within the short period.³⁹

Agricultural Credit Schemes

The SACS continued its function as the major agency for the provision of credit to farmers in the state. The government assisted the agency to function effectively and efficiently through funding from its annual budgetary allocation. The table below shows loan facilities made available to farmers in the five agricultural zones of the state between 1984 and 1987.⁴⁰

Table 8: Total Amount of loans issued by SACS to farmers according to zones and the Refund situation from 1984 to 1987

Zone	Year	Number of farmers	Amount ₦ loaned	Amount ₦ Repaid	Balance ₦
Abakaliki	1984	269	272,500.00	194,408.73	18,892.06
	1985	405	270,900.00	244,897.14	26,002.86
	1986	153	162,600.00	111,050.00	50,550.00
	1987	220	288,800.00	252,800.00	36,000.00
Awka	1984	139	139,000.00	100,456.56	78,892.06
	1985	233	178,700.00	140,891.44	37,808.56
	1986	122	120,600.00	99,800.00	20,800.00
	1987	137	172,400.00	169,200.00	3,200.00
Enugu	1984	159	147,000.00	114,910.74	42,089.26
	1985	314	256,300.00	189,870.84	66,429.13
	1986	190	211,700.00	111,150.00	100,550.00
	1987	208	240,800.00	207,000.00	33,800.00
Nsukka	1984	45	43,800.00	32,521.91	11,278.09
	1985	207	144,700.00	125,169.65	19,530.35
	1986	140	132,400.00	108,700.00	23,700.00
	1987	146	168,200.00	133,000.00	32,200.00
Onitsha	1984	21	19,500.00	15,176.89	4,323.11
	1985	146	172,100.00	88,283.91	83,816.09
	1986	99	94,600.00	89,300.00	5,300.00
	1987	125	144,000.00	88,000.00	56,000.00

Source: Extracted from Table 1.5 "Total amount of loan issued to Anambra State Farmers and the refund situation from 1980 to 1987," in Arene, "Evaluation, 9-11

In 1988, the scheme obtained a government-guaranteed loan of ₦1.7m from the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) Ltd. An additional sum of ₦0.5m "bridging loan" was received from the state government. A total of 2,729 (Two thousand, seven hundred and twenty-nine) applications for loans were received from farmers across the five agricultural zones of the state. Out of these, 1,009 (One thousand and nine) applications were approved. The individual loans ranged from one thousand

³⁹ James Mozie, 50 years, Manager ADP Awka zone, interviewed at ADP office, Amawbia, 16th March, 2012.

⁴⁰ Arene, "Evaluation, 10.

naira to four thousand naira. A sum of nearly ₦1.79m was approved and disbursed to farmers. The SACS loan to farmers attracted interest of fifteen and a half per cent and the loan was repayable within twelve calendar months (one year) of the disbursement.⁴¹

Due to poor loan repayment experienced in the scheme over the years, a committee on loan recovery was set up by the government. The committee examined, in details, the indebtedness of farmers to SACS. Records reveal that the average loan recovery rate was less than forty-two percent between 1980 and 1987. The Committee, therefore, worked out a strategy whereby loan value was repaid with agricultural product. Such produce returned as 'loan repayment' was sold to the public to recover cash equivalent of the loan. This method helped to ensure that it was truly the small-scale farmers that got the loan.⁴² To further ensure greater efficiency in disbursement of loans to small-scale farmers and effective loan recovery, the government established the Anambra State Agricultural Loans Board in 1990.⁴³ The function of this Board was to give effect to the Anambra State Agricultural Loans Scheme. The objectives of the scheme were:

- (a) to improve food production in the state by providing for farmers easy access to agricultural credit;
- (b) to ensure judicious utilization or application by farmers of agricultural credit obtained under the scheme;
- (c) to provide effective machinery for the recovery from benefiting farmers of agricultural loans obtained under the scheme;
- (d) to encourage farmers to form registered cooperative societies for a more effective and prudent use of agricultural credit obtained under the scheme.⁴⁴

With the Board in place, the real small-scale and peasant farmers obtained the loan which was fairly and judiciously disbursed and effective methods of guaranteeing repayment instituted.

Joint Ventures and Private Sector Participation in Agriculture

The government realized that most of its agricultural programmes did not fare well due to the poor performance of past administrations in the management of state-owned agricultural projects. It, therefore, decided to engage private sector partnerships in the management of some of the projects. In 1986, it signed an agreement with ASARFA (Nig) Ltd for the rehabilitation of the cashew projects located at Oghe and Oji-River and industrial production from cashew. It purportedly imported the necessary machinery for the effective operation of the project. Some of its anticipated products were Cashew-nut Shell Liquid (C-NSL), carbonized gas, carbon dioxide, charcoal briquette and cashew canned juice.⁴⁵ Contrary to expectations, none of these products saw the light of day.

In addition to the joint ventures in the cashew project, the government engaged a reputable indigenous manufacturing company for the rehabilitation and development of the state-owned oil palm plantation at Ibite-Olo and Ugwuoba/Inyi. It also signed an agreement with International Greneries Limited for an Integrated Livestock Project which cost it ₦2m. The project was located in Nkwelle-Ezunaka in Anambra Local Government Area. A joint company, the Anambra Integrated Livestock Company Ltd which was incorporated in April 1986, managed the project.⁴⁶

Seed and Crop Multiplication and Improvement Programme

The government procured, multiplied and distributed the under-listed crops to farmers: rice, maize, cassava stems, cowpea, soya beans, varieties of vegetable seeds and seedlings, coconut and mango fruits

⁴¹ ASN, "Approved Estimates," Official Document No. 1, 1990 'Budget Speech' XIX

⁴² ANS, *Focus on Rural Development in Anambra State, Vol. II*, (Enugu; Directorate of Rural Development, Government House and Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, 1989), 29.

⁴³ ASN, Anambra State Agricultural Loans Board Edict, Edict No. 7 of 1990.

⁴⁴ See; Anambra State Agricultural Loans Board Edict, Section 3 (2) a-d.

⁴⁵ ANS, *Development Projects, 1987*, 11.

⁴⁶ ANS, *Development Projects, 1987*, 11.

seeds and seedlings. There were increased efforts in the development of oil palm, horticulture, cocoa, and plant protection. About 434 hectares of land were cleared at Ibite-Olo and Ugwuoba Palm plantations and cocoa nurseries established at three farm locations with 700 cocoa buds procured from the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), Ibadan. Fifteen thousand pre-nursery seedlings, 10,000 nursery seedlings and 2,835 budded seedlings of citrus were produced between January and July 1987 and distributed to farmers.⁴⁷

The Accelerated Seed Yam Multiplication (Minisett Technique) Programme

This programme made available yam seedlings whose increasing cost and gradual diminishing over the years had threatened yam production in the state. In the 1986 farming season, over 1000 seed yam farmers across the state were taught the technique. This technique diffused to yam farmers and led to the production of enormous quantities of seed yams. The availability of these seed yams rekindled the interest of farmers in yam cultivation in the state and addressed the challenge of food shortage which the rural dwellers were the most vulnerable.⁴⁸

Rice Project

Before this period, the government had made enormous investments in rice production through its Ada Rice Production Company (Nig) Ltd and the inputs it provided rice farmers across the state. The projects earmarked for the Second Phase of the Anambra State/World Bank Rice Project were to be on course. Unfortunately, these projects were derelict owing to the general neglect of the state's agricultural projects by the past civilian administration. Rice production in the state was, thus, sustained by local/peasant rice farmers, whose output, which had drastically plummeted, was grossly inadequate to meet local demand.

As part of the concern of the emergent military administration of the state to increase food production, the Military Governor, Navy Captain Allison Madueke, in 1984, instituted the Task Force on Rice Production. Its immediate task was to mobilize all available resources to increase rice output in that year's (1984) planting season. The Anambra/World Bank Rice Project and the Ada Rice Production company were merged and came under the direct control and supervision of the Task Force.⁴⁹

The Task Force provided rice seedlings, fertilizers and other agro-service materials needed to enhance the farmer's output. Another major boost to rice production during this period was the federal government's policy of import restriction on rice. This led to an increase in demand and a rise in the price of locally produced rice. Thus, rice farming became very lucrative. The Task Force revived, revamped and resuscitated the ADA Rice Production Company and the State/World Bank Rice Project. The Task Force⁵⁰ on Rice Production was dissolved in February 1986. The dissolution led to the merger of the Anambra State/World Bank Rice Project from ADA Rice Production Company. Each, then, managed its rice production holdings. The Ada Rice production company assisted a large number of settlers in more than 2,205 hectares of swamp/rain-fed production of rice. This was about half of the entire area available to the company. The company could not farm on the entire land available to it due to paucity of funds.

Concerning the State/World Bank rice project, it was observed in the previous section of this paper that the goals of the second phase, which commenced in 1984, were to complete and deepen the programmes of the first phase. It deserves to be stated that only a modicum of achievement was recorded considering the expectations of the project managers. The major reason was a dearth of funds. These achievements deserve to be highlighted. In the first place, there was an increase in the number of project farmers. It increased from 2,467 by 1981 to 3,148 in 1989.⁵¹ In addition, rice cultivation grew in popularity in the

⁴⁷ See: ANS, *Focus*, Vol. 1, 9; ANS, *Development Projects*, 1987, 11.

⁴⁸ ANS, *Focus* Vol. 1, 8.

⁴⁹ ANS, Budget Speech, 1990, XII.

⁵⁰ See: ANS, Budget Speech, 1990, XII; ANS, *Focus* Vol. II, 9.

⁵¹ ANS, *Focus*, Vol. 1, 57.

catchment area of each location. Most of the rice belts in the state emerged as a result of the radiating effects of the various locations. For instance, the Orumba Rice Belt from the Enugu-Abo, Ufuma and Ogboji locations and the Uzo-Uwani Rice Belt from the Adani location. Related to this was the establishment of the Odekpe location. This brought to seven the number of its project locations in the state. Furthermore, active cooperative societies operating in the seven locations increased to 25 from the 19 that participated in the project during the first phase.⁵² There is no doubt that these project locations inspired rice cultivation in their environs, but it is unfortunate to note that the projects at the various locations have crumbled and are presently desolate and in ruination. Successive governments could not manage the projects. The projects were tossed from the hands of one private investor to the other, under whose control the equipment was vandalized and looted.⁵³

Crop and Vegetable Production Programme

The DFRRI participation increased the scope and intensity of activities on the Seed and Crop Multiplication and Improvement Programme. It injected the following into the Scheme: Fruit Tree Seedling Production; Nurseries, Progeny Gardens; Market Garden Development and Homestead Fruit Tree Planting Programme. Under the production of fruit from seedlings, the state DFRRI exceeded its allocated target of 935,000 by producing a gross target of 1,157,155 in its fruit seedlings operations between 1986 and 1989. However, some shortfalls were recorded in some crop areas owing to crop failures while surpluses were recorded in others.

In the Vegetable Production Scheme, about 8.5 hectares of dry-season vegetable gardens were established for the production of seeds that were used for 1989 planting season. The following species and quantities of vegetable seeds were sold to farmers in the 1989 farming season; 500gm *Amaranthus*, 500gm onions; 500gm tomatoes; 25 sachets of lettuce, 25 sachets of melon, 250gm carrot, 50gm pepper and 250 sachets of cabbage.⁵⁴

Crop Protection Programme

The outbreak of diseases and attacks from pests were major threats to agriculture in the state. The government remedied this situation through its crop protection programme. An outstanding achievement of the State's Ministry of Agriculture in this respect was the successful extermination, in the 1986 farming season, of the mealy-bug pest, which again threatened cassava cultivation. This was made possible through the multiplication and supply to farmers, of a new-breed, disease resistant, high-yielding cassava stick to replace the old disease-ridden and low-yielding species. In another related activity, the ministry frontally confronted the rice pests which ravaged rice farms. In the 1988 cropping season, rice production in the state suffered a serious setback through the outbreak of the rice pest, African rice gall midge (*Orseolia oryzivora*), which attacked rice farms in the major rice belts of the state. By the 1989 cropping season, emphasis was placed on the crop's protection. In addition, there was a massive purchase of improved rice seedlings which were chemically treated and distributed to the farmers.

Public enlightenment and educational campaigns were mounted on both radio and television on how to prevent such outbreaks in the future. Also, an orientation course was organized for agricultural extension workers on the best practices for the prevention and control of such situations, which they imparted to the local rice farmers. The sum of ₦3m was expended on these and the supply of rice seedlings and chemicals by the government. These measures restored, to a large extent, the confidence of rice farmers, especially in the Abakaliki zone, which was the worst hit. Thus, by the end of July 1989, some 7,091 farmers had gone back to rice production.⁵⁵

⁵² ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 20.

⁵³ Personal Observation of the writer on the inspection of Enugu-Abor, Ufuma World Bank Rice Project and Fish Pond sites, and Ogboji World Bank Rice Project on 3rd March, 2024.

⁵⁴ ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 22

⁵⁵ See: ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 18; ANS, *Government Programmes and Projects 1988-1990*, 35.

Market Garden Development and Homestead Fruit Tree Planting Programme

Twenty sites each with five participants were used in 14 LGAs for market garden development. These market gardens engaged in dry-season vegetable production. The ADP and the State Ministry of Agriculture staff provided extension services for this programme. The state DFRRI Task Force on Fruits and Vegetable Production provided inputs like seeds and seedlings to the various market gardens, and the ADP supplied the needed fertilizers. The local farmers bought their seeds and seedlings from the market gardens. The Homestead Fruit Tree Planting Programme was devoted to the development of fruit trees such as mango, guava, and citrus, among others. This received wide acceptance in the state. Individuals, churches, schools and local government authorities patronized the programme. The DFRRI Task Force on Fruit, Seed, and Vegetable Production supplied these groups with the required varieties of fruit tree seedlings as well as pineapple and plantain/banana suckers.⁵⁶

Fisheries and Fishing

A popular system of fish farming, the homestead concrete fish pond, was introduced in the state in 1986 by the Ministry of Agriculture. By 1987, the fisheries division of the ministry had assisted farmers in the state to set up over 200 such ponds and the production of fingerlings. Table fish production commenced with the installation of two floating platforms of 100 fish larges and two spawning ponds at the Iyi Ojii Lake, Nike, in Enugu LGA. Ten ponds were set up at Enugu-Abo, Ufuma, Aguata LGA for hatchery, massive production of fish fry and fingerlings. Also, two ponds were established at Umuekete, Aguleri fish culture farm. But it appears the government could not give these projects the required attention.⁵⁷

The involvement of DFRRI gave fish farming in the state a great boost. The DFRRI through its Aquaculture Implementation Agency rehabilitated and expanded the state's fish farms. With respect to the Ufuma hatchery, the Agency successfully rehabilitated 8 out of the 10 existing ponds. These ponds were used partly as nursery or rearing ponds for the fry as well as grow-out ponds for some of the fingerlings produced at the hatchery. For the hatchery proper, a total of seven hatchery tanks of eighteen compartments were constructed. The hatchery produced fingerlings which were sold to fish farmers. In the same vein, fingerling production commenced in the hatchery complex at the Adani site with its completion in 1989. Furthermore, The State Committee on Aquaculture conducted a survey aimed at obtaining record of water bodies in the state for possible stocking with excess fingerlings produced from the hatcheries.⁵⁸

DFRRI's collaboration with the fisheries division of the state's Ministry of Agriculture inspired private sector participation in fish farming. The homestead fish pond programme attracted wide public sector participation. Such ponds were established by schools, hospitals, churches, local government councils and private individuals. By the end of 1989, about one thousand fish ponds were spread over the state, and many more were still springing up. The construction of the DFRRI fish hatcheries motivated fish farmers to establish fish hatcheries. Some such hatcheries were; Chief Ogbo Fish Hatchery, Achina in Aguata LGA, Ulasi Fish Hatchery, Isiagu, Awka LGA, PETRINNO Fish Hatchery, Enugu, among others. Similarly, there was increased interest by the private sector in fish feed production. Two of these, PACYMA FISH FEEDS and PETRINNO FISH FEEDS, Enugu, stood out.⁵⁹

Livestock and Poultry

Before this period, the government had livestock farms at Achi, Adada, Ezillo, Mgbakwu, Nkwelle-Ezunaka and Oghe. A hatchery was located at Abakaliki. Like most government's agricultural programmes, these had become derelict due to the neglect by the past government (civilian administration). Within the present period, the state government with assistance from the federal government and the World Bank, reactivated them. The most significant was the Nkwelle-Ezunaka

⁵⁶ ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 19.

⁵⁷ ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 20.

⁵⁸ See: ANS, *Government Programmes*, 36; ANS, *Focus* Vol. II, 19.

⁵⁹ ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 26.

livestock project which was managed by a joint venture between the state government and a private investor, as already noted in this paper. The hatchery was also resuscitated and made productive. It produced day-old chicks which were made available to poultry farmers. This helped to popularise poultry farming in the state. A good number of retirees from the public service, which had grown in number in the recent past, invested in poultry farming. The popular breed of fowl grown was the broiler species which has fast maturity and excellent table quality.⁶⁰

The collaboration of the livestock division of the Ministry of Agriculture with DFRRI in the following schemes; Sheep/goat breeding/multiplication, Rabbit breeding/multiplication, Feeder-seed multiplication and Livestock extension and Veterinary services, boosted livestock farming in the state. As of the middle of 1989, the following breeder stock of livestock was bred at the following centres, 210 of sheep/goat at Achi and Ezillo farms, 200 and 238 rabbits at Ezillo and Mgbakwu farms, respectively. Concerning fodder for the ruminants, five hectares of land were planted with the pasture (white and black-seeded type), known as the lab-lab bean, *stylo scanthon*, *humlin/grecilin* and cowpea. On the Livestock extension and Veterinary Services, fridges and coolers stocked with veterinary equipment, chemicals and drugs were distributed to the then 23 LGAs of the state.⁶¹ The rabbit breeding programme was a novel one. It exposed farmers to the enormous economic potential of rabbit farming and popularized the consumption of rabbit meat as a source of protein.

Food Processing, Preservation and Storage

The government realized that its effort to increase food production in the state would remain a mirage if there were no effective methods for the processing, preservation and storage of the harvest. It, therefore, set up a Task Force on Food Processing, Preservation and Storage, with the following terms of reference;

- (a) stock-taking of food processing and preservation, the storage capability of the state, especially government-owned facilities,
- (b) to identify and find additional specific and targeted problems for solution,
- (c) set-up small-scale food processing centres in rural areas,
- (d) buy-up surplus harvests for preservation, storage and resale, and
- (e) act in an advisory capacity to the government, private entrepreneurs and general public.

Some notable achievements recorded in food storage were: the introduction of the maize crib technology, the establishment of the Grain Reserve and Marketing Scheme and the establishment of storage warehouses/silos. In practical terms, twenty-one maize cribs were constructed by the state ministry of agriculture in twenty-one LGAs to teach farmers simple and inexpensive methods of drying and storing maize in order to reduce post-harvest losses. In the Grain and Marketing Scheme, surplus paddy was purchased from farmers during the harvest period and preserved for milling in the future. This helped to stabilize the market price of the commodity by avoiding glut during the harvest period and ensuring continued availability of the commodity off-season. It also raised the rice farmers' income. In 1988, the Scheme bought more than 230 tons of paddy with the loan of ₦1.5m made available to it by the federal government. The state government also reactivated its storage warehouses located at Abakaliki, Awka and Onitsha.⁶²

Oil Palm Development

The government initiated three programmes for oil palm development in this period. These were; the Anambra State Oil Palm Project, The Palm for Palm Programme and the Small-holder Palm Development Scheme. It also established the Oil Palm Development Agency to facilitate the attainment of the goals of the Oil Palm Development Scheme.

Anambra State Oil Palm Project

⁶⁰ See: ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 24; Uyaamezina, interview cited.

⁶¹ ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 26.

⁶² See: ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 24; ANS, *Government Programmes*, 35.

Under this project, the government engaged private sector cooperation to revive, resuscitate and manage its palm plantations at Ibite-Olo and Ugwuoba/Inyi. This was part of the government's policy to adopt joint ventures for the management of some of its agricultural projects in order to obtain optimum result.

The Palm for Palm Programme

The need to harness private and individual initiatives in the development of oil palm made the government to introduce the Palm for Palm Programme. It was established for the purpose of improving the living standards of the rural dwellers through the wealth generated from the oil palm tree. The main objective of the programme was to replace the old, wild palm trees with improved and high-yielding species. A special Task force was set up for the implementation of the programme.

Under the programme, the government embarked on a state-wide distribution of improved oil palm seedlings. In 1987, over ten thousand (10,000) palm seedlings were distributed to farmers in each of the then twenty-three LGAs in the state.⁶³ The programme also received generous funding. ₦4.15m was allocated to it in the 1988 Approved Estimates.⁶⁴

The Small-holder Oil Palm Development Scheme

This scheme was adopted as a strategy of economic reconstruction because of government's conviction that oil palm, as a crop, could best be developed on the basis of private ownership. It was also a strategy for stimulating private sector participation on plantation agriculture and agro-industrial processing. It was in accord with the concept of privatization which was then a national economic policy. Privatization implies the shift from heavy reliance on the public sector to private sector activities. Private sector participation ensures high efficiency and brings about the desired competitiveness vital for the viability of the oil palm industry. The Small-holder oil Palm Scheme was, therefore, the people's programme with strong government backing and patronage. It was a call for all adult citizens of the state to establish and own 0.5 to 10 hectares of oil palm plantation of the improved Tenera variety.⁶⁵

For the successful implementation of the programme, a small corps of eight (8) office staff and 27 agro-professional staff were employed. Twenty-three of these professional staff was deployed to their local governments of origin as oil palm development officers to render all necessary extension services and to ensure that the programme succeeded at the grassroots. The government also set up the Palm Development Committee. These were to ensure that every citizen identified with the programme as a vital and important area of economic activity. In 1989, the government approved a fifty per cent subsidy on seedling inputs for small-holders. The seedlings which were raised and transported to the various local government agro-service centres at an estimated average cost of ₦4 (Four naira) were sold to farmers at a subsidized rate of ₦2 (two naira). A total of 350,000 (Three hundred and fifty thousand) seedlings were distributed to farmers in each of the 23 LGAs of the state. In addition, 1,600 (One thousand, six hundred) bags of 50kg 12.12.17+2 fertilizer were supplied to each of the LGAs for sale and distribution to the oil palm farmers at ₦10 (Ten naira) per bag. For the 1990 planting season, the committee procured sprouted nuts and transplanted 1.5m seedlings in Nineteen (19) nursery locations in thirteen LGAs with assistance from Contract Seedling Growers.⁶⁶

Aside massive planting of the oil palm tree, the Oil Palm Development Scheme also entailed harvesting, harnessing and utilization. The committee made a comprehensive inventory of palm plantations in the state with the view to determine the location of processing mills for the extraction of oil palm and palm kernel. This was done to further the growth of rural industries based on the oil palm and provide the raw-material needs of the state vegetable oil plant at Nachi.⁶⁷

⁶³ ANS, *Development Projects*, 42.

⁶⁴ ANS, *Approval Estimates, 1988*, XII.

⁶⁵ ANS, *Development Projects*, 47.

⁶⁶ See: ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 28; ANS, *Development Projects*, 48.

⁶⁷ ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 32.

It is, however, pertinent to observe that there were some bottlenecks in the attainment of the objectives of the programme. There was the usual attitude of indifference towards government's projects: the people expected government to fund all aspects of the project. Second, the land tenure system and fragmentary land holding practice prevalent in the state killed the drive and enthusiasm of many a person that wished to participate in the programme because of unavailability of land and, in most cases also, the lack of fund to acquire the required acreage of land.⁶⁸ These notwithstanding, the scheme created awareness on the immense benefits of planting the improved species of the oil palms. It also popularized the establishment of oil palm plantation as a form of business investment. Businessmen and retirees as well as top civil servants bought or leased land in places of relative land surplus and established oil palm plantations in them. A typical example is the Umeano oil palm plantation, Adani, Uzo-Uwani LGA.

The government, in the effort to ensure greater efficiency in the programme, in 1989, enacted the Oil Palm Development Agency, Edict.⁶⁹ The edict established the Oil Palm Development Board. The agency executed the Small-holder Oil Palm Development programme of the state government and took over the duties of the Task Force on Palm for Palm Scheme and the Palm Development Committee. It established new plantations, resuscitated disused oil palm plantations and expanded existing ones.⁷⁰ The key lesson from the palm project is the fact that increased agricultural production lies in the hands of small-holder farmers.

Conclusion

This paper has exhaustively discussed and analyzed Anambra state government's engagement in agricultural production. It discovers that agriculture was a matter of considerable interest to governments that preceded the creation of Anambra State in 1976. Therefore, the state anchored its programme on the Schemes bequeathed to it by the previous regimes. In some instances, it jettisoned a few, rechristened others and intensified activities on them and also initiated new ones. For instance the Farm Settlement programme of Eastern Nigerian government was abandoned, while activities on oil palm, on the whole, received commendable attention.

In assessing government's engagements in agriculture between two periods of the paper, there was noticeable improvements in agricultural production within the second period. This was a marked deviation from the 1976-1983 period when party politics in the state impeded virtually all aspects of governance, which impacted negatively on agricultural production. The government programmes of the second period (1984-1991), had profound positive impact. The resuscitation of the tree crops created awareness on their economic potentials to farmers. They embraced the cultivation of the crops and made enormous profit therefrom. It also stimulated rural and agro-based industries, especially palm oil and palm kernel production. The seedlings produced at the market gardens also increased their availability to farmers in good quantity and at the right time. The livestock farms/projects created rural employment and led to increased economic activities in the host communities. The product of the fruit trees improved the quality of the people's diet. There was remarkable improvement on food production as the cultivation of different food crops increased significantly. Although, the agricultural credit scheme made loans available to farmers, such loan was accessed by insignificant proportion of farmers in the state. But the question that begs an answer is, how sustainable were such improvements? A perceptive and dispassionate appraisal of the projects would reveal that the projects were not properly supervised by succeeding administrations of the state. The administrations transferred most of the projects to private investors that lacked the competence to manage them. Additionally, such administrations were more inclined to establish their own schemes than to manage the bequests from previous regimes. Drawing from hind sights, this paper ventures to submit that the growth and improvement of agriculture in Nigeria as a whole lies in enhancing the productive capacity of small-holder farmers.

⁶⁸ Ogechukwu Ezeajughu, 58 years, Community Leader, Awgbu, Orumba LGA, interview at Awka on 9th Nov. 2011; Nnaemeka Ikenegbu, 62 years Businessman, interview at Agbadala Achi, on 10th June, 2012.

⁶⁹ ASN, Anambra State Oil Palm Development Agency Edict, Edict No. 9 of 1989.

⁷⁰ See: ANS, *Focus*, Vol. II, 35; ANS, *Development Projects*, 37.