

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION IN NIGERIA IN THE NEXT DECADE: SOME NOTES, SOME OPTIONS

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“The man with the hoe” still remains an apt description of the Nigerian farmer today. In spite of decades of immense expenditures and investments into agriculture, in terms of money men and materials, by national and international governments and agencies, the average Nigerian farmer remains an indigent serf, regarded by today’s youths as a dreadful anachronism.

The Nigerian agricultural industry, populated as it is by aged and ageing peasants, has progressively developed into a world of drudgery for losers, shunned and despised by Nigerian youths. To change this ugly/unsavoury image of Nigerian agriculture, it has now become imperative to adopt an appropriate level of engine-power agricultural mechanization technology (EPAMT), necessary and sufficient to modernize, energize and revitalize the industry. This paper opines that the most viable option to achieve the objective is a mechanization strategy which can create the conducive environment for the emergence of small-to-medium-scale (SMS) market-orientated, youthful farmers, who will voluntarily choose to go into agriculture as a respectable and profitable business. This canvassed SMS farmer-oriented mechanization strategy is justified in this paper with objective analyses of information and data collected through surveys, interviews and a requisite review of relevant literature.