



Agricultural Policy Research Network

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**2015/2016 ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED BY DR. ANTHONY O. ONOJA
ACTING PRESIDENT, APRNet, AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND 4TH
RESEARCH POLICY SEMINAR OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH
NETWORK HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA
ON 18TH NOVEMBER, 2016**

Distinguished guests and Members of Agricultural Policy Research Network present, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this August event of our great network, APRNet holding here at University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN). The choice of this location (UNN) did not come by accident. Nsukka and indeed the South East zone of Nigeria, has the largest concentration of APRNet members in Nigeria. UNN too, besides being the address used to register APRNet with the Corporate Affairs Commission, is the affiliation of our pioneer President, Dr. Eric Eboh (who currently is on leave of absence at Delta State). So, this can be regarded as a *home coming* for APRNet too. However, this is also in sync with the plan of APRNet to rotate this event around the country.

This report, being an annual report, also contains the Q3 (3rd Quarter report of the network) knowing full well that APRNet operated effectively from the supposed 2nd Quarter of the year of assumption of duty to the fourth quarter (now referred to as the Q3).

Established in 2009, The Agricultural Policy Research Network (APRNet), was incorporated on 4th June, 2011 under the Nigerian COMPANY AND ALLIED MATTERS DECREE, 1990 as an NGO Limited by Guarantee. APRNet has been facilitated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) which seeks sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty. IFPRI is one of 15 centres supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The vision of APRNet is to be an authoritative and independent forum for promoting research for evidence-based agricultural and rural development policies in Nigeria and Africa. Its mission is to facilitate the conduct of research as well as the communication and utilization of research results in the agriculture and rural development policy process in Nigeria.

As vividly written on APRNet website (<http://www.aprnetworking.org>), APRNet represents stakeholders' strategic response to the weak linkages and obvious disconnect between research and policymaking in the country. The goal of APRNet is to promote evidence-based policies for agricultural and rural development. Its key function is to enhance linkages and build bridges between research, policy and practice. APRNet is aimed at facilitating the conduct of research and as well as the communication and utilization of research results to end-users including agricultural policymakers and practitioners. APRNet's primary object is to promote the uptake of research outputs into policy and practice and thereby making research work for end-users. The core value proposition of APRNet is to build bridges that connect research, policy and practice in the agricultural and rural development sector.

The **objectives** of APRNet are as follows:

- I. promote the exchange of existing research information (methods, data, publications, etc);
- II. mobilize a pool of financial resources for conduct of independent policy research;
- III. encourage mentoring of upcoming policy researchers (including peer reviewing of their research and giving professional guidance in the art of field and desk research)
- IV. create channels for linking research with policy process;
- V. encourage the use of research results in the policy process.

APRNet programmes/projects are structured along the following thematic areas:

- I. Policy research and policy analysis;
- II. Research communications and policy dialogue;
- III. Capacity building for linkages of research, policy and practice;
- IV. Public enlightenment and stakeholder engagement.

Underlying the programmes of APRNet are critical functional value-creating products and services:

- a. Facilitator of policy research and policy analysis;
- b. Policy advocacy;
- c. Network loop;
- d. Agent of information and learning;
- e. Services provider.

The foregoing tasks are pursued by APRNet across the following agricultural and rural development policy issues:

- a) Institutions and services – public and private finance for agriculture, farm services, agribusiness, market development, research and extension.
- b) Productivity, growth and sustainability – input use, technological accumulation, growth drivers, climate change, environmental health, linkage to other sectors (e.g. manufacturing industry).
- c) Infrastructure production and consumption – farm development, irrigation, storage and processing, transportation and power.
- d) Public-private partnerships – optimal mix of public and private sector roles and responsibilities, intergovernmental fiscal and policy relations.,
- e) Other policy relevant research issues as may be determined by the Executive Council.

APRNet, alongside its partner, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) had pursued the above mandates vigorously over the years with its EXCO and some active members recording milestones in the process.

In November, 2015 when the leader of APRNet found he could no longer cope with the enormity of the tasks of simultaneously running APRNet with the new appointment he had at Delta State as the Job Creation Officer, Professor Eric Eboh shopped for a leader who could carry the baton of leadership of APRNet from where stopped. This led to convening of an emergency EXCO meeting in Asaba on 10th November, 2015. At the end of the meeting, Dr. Anthony Onoja was appointed the acting President of APRNet with effect from 11th November 2015 to 22nd November, 2016 at the end of which general election will be conducted. This means that a general election has to be conducted today to determine who will steer the ship of APRNet leadership for the next five years.

During the reference period *November 2015 to November 2016), activities undertaken and milestones recorded included:

- **Journal Launch:** The maiden journal of APRNet, Nigerian Agricultural Policy Journal (NAPReJ) was launched during the period. The editorial members were constituted and includes mostly senior experts from related disciplines in agricultural, food and environmental sciences. Members were drawn from different countries across the globe and gender. The call for this journal has been widely circulated among the network members as well as non-members via posters, handbills, e-mail messages, notice on the network's website and personal contacts. The journal is starting as a bi-annual journal in the first year after which it will become quarterly after some years. The maiden journal of APRNet, Nigerian Agricultural Policy Research Journal (NAPReJ) was unveiled during the period. This was done at Valencia Hotels, Abuja during the 3rd National Stakeholders Forum on 10th August, 2016 in a well attended and publicized ceremony. The journal got its ISSN during the period (The ISSN is: **2536-6084**). The maiden journal was numbered Volume 1, Issue 1, 2016. The journal, which has a total number of 12 original research articles from researchers of diverse backgrounds in agricultural policy and development, is 139 pages in length besides the preliminary pages of 5 pages. At least 8 individuals and 4 organizations obtained some copies with some donations above the bench price of ₦2000. Most of the donations were pledges whose redemption are still being expected. When fully redeemed, the donations could amount to about ₦150,000.00. APRNet intends to get the next volume out before the end of the year with some submissions already received and the papers presented at the national stakeholders' forum and research policy seminar.

At the time of writing this report the National Library of Nigeria (NLN) issued us with an online ISSN (in addition to the Print ISSN we got earlier in the year before the unveiling of the journal) for the planned online version of the NAPReJ issues. Meanwhile the second volume of the journal is expected to be published in December, 2016.

APRNet Engaged with Stakeholders at South South Region in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

In June 2016, the South -South Zone of APRNet organized a stakeholders meeting at the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Port Harcourt to share its vision, mission and strategies while canvassing for membership. Below are the pictures reflecting the interactive session of APRNet with South -South agricultural and rural development stake holders held recently in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.



The picture in which participants were standing shows the Acting President of APRNet Dr. Tony Onoja (in white at the centre). Beside him, to the left is Dr. Mercy E. Ndubueze-Ogaraku, APRNet South-South zonal co-ordinator with other stakeholders in Port Harcourt Universities during the interactive meeting with APRNet on 17th June, 2016 at University of Port Harcourt. Kudos to our South - South representative who teamed up with the APRNet Ag. President to successfully host this event.



The APRNet Ag. President, Dr. Tony Onoja and the Zonal Coordinator of South-South APRNet at the Interactive Session with the South-South Agricultural and Rural Development Stakeholders at University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) on June 17th 2016.

- APRNet Hosted its 3rd **NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS FORUM ON MAKING AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH WORK FOR END-USERS**. APRNet successfully hosted the above mentioned event during the period in review as a way of sustaining the dialogue towards resolving a problem that has been around for a long time. The forum which was attended by about 50 delegates from across different sectors of Nigerian agricultural value chains (researchers, academics, government, private sector leaders and farmers' representatives as well as the mass media), made reasonable impact on promotion and fostering of informed policy dialogue among all stakeholders in the agricultural sector through an inclusive, transparent, and sustainable process at the country level, building blocks for a well-integrated and developed national policy system. The event was chaired by the Executive Secretary, Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN), Professor Yusuf Abubakar. Highlights of the event were transmitted on Nigerian.



Participants at the 4th National Stakeholders' Forum in Abuja (August, 2016)

national and international televisions (*AIT International, Core TV* and *TVC News*), newspapers (*The Punch, The Pilot* and some other online newspapers) and online Magazines (See *AgroNigeria*). Post events analyses were also done in some TV programmes which could be viewed from the TVC international as well as on IFPRI's NSSP website. Some online links that still featured this events are as follows in addition to the APRNet website features: <http://nigerianpilot.com/stakeholders-see-improved-agric-research-funding-review-arcn-budget/> , <http://punchng.com/agric-experts-see-review-research-council-budget/> , <http://agronigeria.com.ng/stakeholders-canvass-adequate-funding-agricultural-research/> and <http://bit.ly/2bly2o7> (IFPRI's link). After the

event a communiqué was drafted and made available to the public including Federal Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders in Nigerian agriculture. The communiqué is still being distributed

- **2016 Annual Agricultural Research Policy Seminar (1) of APRNet was Held**
During the period in review, APRNet, used the opportunity of hosting its 3rd National Multi-stakeholders forum to flag its annual event, Agricultural Research Policy Seminar too. The decision was made in order to save cost of logistics. The second policy seminar will be hosted sometime in September 2016. The one held on 10th August had a paper presented by Dr. Zelda Elum (PhD) of University of



From left to right, Dr. Anthony O. Onoja, Dr. George Mavrotas (IFPRI Country Programme Coordinator) and Prof. Yusuf Abubakar, Executive Director, Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN), unveiling the maiden APRNet journal (Nigerian Agricultural Policy Journal, NAPReJ) at Abuja during the Stakeholders Forum/Agricultural Policy Research Seminar in August 2016

Port Harcourt. The choice of a woman this time around was to mainstream gender in the mix of presenters of the policy seminar series. Her paper was titled: *A review of status and potential of agriculture as a renewable energy source in climate change mitigation in Nigeria*. The paper presentation was well received by the audience.

- **UPDATE OF MEMBERS PROFILE**

During the period under review, members' profile were updated in line with the current status of each member. The database now contains the full contact details of

every member of the network. At the end of the exercise, we found that one of APRNet members, Professor Nwajiuba, was appointed as a Vice Chancellor of a Federal University in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. In addition to this, a very active member, Dr. Celestine Nze, was appointed as a head of department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. Not long after this, APRNet Treasurer, Dr. Ike P.C. was promoted to the rank of a Professor at Delta State University. During the review period, the Acting President, Dr. Tony O. Onoja, was also promoted to the rank of a Senior Lecturer and shortly after then appointed as the Head, Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Port Harcourt. We



APRNET EXCOs, From Left, Dr. Celestine Nze (South East Regional Coordinator, Dr. Mercy E. Ndubueze-Ogaraku, South-South regional coordinator, Dr. Tony O. Onoja, Ag. President, Dr. Gloria Ujor, Vice President, Prof. PC Ike, Treasurer and Dr. Victor Oboh, Secretary.

also witnessed the promotion of Dr. Gabriel Okafor to the rank of a Professor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. There could be more appointments from our members that were not reported. On the sad side, our Secretary, Dr. Victor Oboh, lost his mother who was buried on 29th October, 2016. The funeral was attended by the two EXCO members, Dr. Tony O. Onoja and Prof. PC Ike on behalf of APRNet members.

The President of APRNet, Dr. Tony O. Onoja, bagged an award of Excellence in Teaching from the Nigerian Association of Agricultural Economics and Extension Students (NAAEES), University of Port Harcourt Chapter. This award was received on 12th November, 2016 and complements an earlier award received from the University of Port Harcourt Centre for Research Management (in 2015) for outstanding contribution to research.



The President of APRNet, Dr. Tony O. Onoja, bagged an award of Excellence in Teaching from the Nigerian Association of Agricultural Economics and Extension Students (NAAEES), University of Port Harcourt Chapter.

APRNet Held its 4th Agricultural Policy Research Seminar

On the 18th of November, 2016, APRNet members converged on the University of Nigeria Nsukka to hold its 4th Agricultural Policy Research Seminar. It witnessed a presentation of the second Agricultural Policy Research Seminar and the 4th in its series. This paper presented was titled *Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES) of Nigerian Agricultural Transformation Agenda: Looking back and thinking ahead* by Dr. Augustine Odinakachukwu Ejiogu of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Extension and Rural Development, Imo State University, Owerri.



Group Picture of Some Early Guests at the event



A participant and Member of APRNet (Dr. E. Amaechina) at the registration desk

APRNet Annual General Meeting and Elections Held at University of Nigeria

Two other events were held besides the APRNet Agricultural Policy Research Seminar at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. One of the events was the annual general meeting (AGM) of the network. At the meeting the treasurer presented the year ending's financial reports for adoption. It was adopted after careful scrutiny and explanation as requested on some items. The President also presented the APRNet Annual Report for the year 2015/2016 which was well received. These were then followed by the dissolution of the cabinet. The LOC, under the leadership of Professor Anthonia I. Achike, received the APRNet members very well and with the help of many other members of APRNet at the Department of Agricultural Economics, UNN, facilitated so many logistic arrangements that made the event a huge success.

APRNet Donated Books to Faculty of Agriculture and Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nigeria Nsukka

APRNet members donated some copies of its maiden journal (NAPReJ) to both the Faculty of Agriculture and the Department of Agricultural Economics. These were highly appreciated by the Head of the Department, Professor SAND Chidebelu and the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, represented by the Associate Dean, Dr. Anselm Enete (both APRNet Members too).



The Vice President (Dr. Gloria Ujor) and APRNet EXCO led by Dr. Tony Onoja presenting some books to the Faculty of Agriculture, UNN and the Department of Agricultural Economics as Prof. SAND Chidebelu (HoD Agric. Econs, UNN) receives the books while Dr. A. Enete (Associate Dean) and member of APRNet looked on.

APRNet Members Paid Courtesy Call to the Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria Nsukka

After the Paper Presentation by Dr. Odi Ejiogu, APRNet members, led by the then acting President, D. Ony Onoja, was warmly received by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and the University Management in the Vice Chancellor's office where the visions and activities of APRNet were shared with him and cooperation with the university in line with our objectives was sought.



APRNet Members with the VC, University of Nigeria and Management Team after a courtesy call on 18th November, 2016

APRNet General Election held

APRNet General Election was held at the same venue of the AGM and Policy Seminar on 16th November, 2016. At the end of the day the following members emerged successful at the polls under unanimous decisions of the congress:

1. Dr. Anthony O. Onoja, President-elect.
2. Professor PC Ike - Vice President
3. Dr. Celestine Emeka Nze - General Secretary
4. Dr. Gloria Ujor - Treasurer
5. Dr. Mercy Ebere Ndubueze-Ogaraku - Assistant Secretary
6. Professor Gabriel Okafor - Research Coordinator
7. Professor Rabi Muhammed Sanni - North-East Zonal Coordinator
8. Mr. Dan Oyoboh - North Central Zonal Coordinator
9. Dr. Zelda Elum - South-South Zonal Coordinator
10. Dr. Odinakachukwu Ejiogu - South East Zonal Coordinator

Pending Positions still vacant at the time of filing this report includes:

1. South West Zonal Coordinator
2. North West Zonal Coordinator

3. Second Vice President (To Be Nominated by the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development)

Interested candidates for this positions (the first two) who are in good financial standing with the Network have been informed to fill in the vacancies by indicating their interest in writing to the General Secretary and the President.

As you may know, these EXCO will lead the Network for the next 5 years.



A Cross Section of the Elected APRNet EXCO that will lead APRNet for the next 5 Years. From left to right are : Dr. C. E. Nze (Secretary), Dr. M. E. Ndubueze Ogaraku (Assistant Secretary), Prof. PC Ike (Vice President), Dr. Tony Onoja (President), Dr. Gloria Ujor (Treasurer) and Dr. Odi A. Ejiogu (South-East Zonal Coordinator).

• **MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERS MOBILIZATION**

Efforts to increase membership capacity have been yielding desired results as APRNet registered enrolment of a new foreign or international member, Dr. Freda Asem, a Ghanaian citizen shortly after Dr. Tony Onoja assumed office as the acting President. Dr. Freda Asem had been on the editorial board of NAPReJ before she became a member. We also recorded 11 new Nigerian members, As at 2015 APRNet had the following members: 96 Regular members; 1 Non regular member; 2 Associate members; 1 Corporate member, and 1 non-Nigeria member. Unfortunately, one of the regular members in the person of Professor Joseph Agbamu passed on by December 24th, 2015 reducing the number of regular members by then to 95. Now, the regular members have increased to 109 while we expect more to register soon. Meanwhile the number of foreign members has increased to 2. The total number of members as at today is 109.

Prospective members of APRNet are continuously being contacted via emails messages and telephone calls. The awareness creation efforts around relevant stakeholders using the APRNet information brochure and personal contacts have been yielding positive results. An updated brochure was printed and was being circulated to different networks and individuals that are deemed to be potential members of APRNet. Reasonable number of copies are also being circulated online and in print versions to attract more members. Old members who were yet to update their annual membership subscription were constantly being reminded on the need to do so. This has equally yielded positive result as many members updated their membership (financially) within the period in review. Some other members promised to update their membership soon.

Website Visibility Status

The statistics on the APRNet website's visibility status are presented in Figures 1 and 2. From Figure 1 and 2, it is indicated that unique visitors to the websites increased from 100 to 303 at the end of April, 2016; number of visits increased from 220 in January 2016 to 1040 by end of April, 2016.

Web Statistics for www.aprnetworkng.org 01 Jan. – 13 June 2016

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2016	100	220	679	2,764	182.47 MB
Feb 2016	50	127	438	1,098	85.82 MB
Mar 2016	70	329	829	1,941	102.72 MB
Apr 2016	303	1,040	5,517	11,932	202.01 MB
May 2016	385	1,378	3,846	12,563	253.18 MB
Jun 2016	207	506	1,963	5,493	85.46 MB
Total	1,115	3,600	13,272	35,791	911.66 MB

Figure 1 . Website Statistics for APRNet Website from January to 12th June, 2016

Page hits rose from a dismal 679 in January 2016 to a very high and impressive level of 5,717 by the end of April, 2016. The hits rose from 2764 to a record level of 11,923 at the end of April, 2016. Bandwidth increased from 182.7MB in January to 202.01 by end of April, 2016. The foregoing figures attest to the rising interest the public is having in the activities of APRNet coupled with the drive by the EXCO to publicize and revive the network which was relatively in comatose stage as at last year (2015). There is obviously an increased boost in the confidence level of members of APRNet now, albeit cautiously, as some members are still maintaining a "wait and see" attitude. The slow web activity in February is attributed to the challenge we had with the host server of the website which was completely down almost throughout the month. This was corrected after the acting

President intervened. It is hoped, with certainty, that the tempo of the website visits would rise with the planned modification and enrichment of the website with new features and contents in the next few weeks especially that would follow after the presentation of the journal and the stakeholders' forum on making research work for end-users. The President and EXCO, in addition to the above plan, planned to sustain the trend through increased publicity of APRNet activities as well as increased membership drive. The statistics on the APRNet website's visibility status are presented in Figures 2.

Web Statistics for www.aprnetworkng.org 01 May. – 24 August 2016

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
May 2016	385	1,378	3,846	12,563	253.18 MB
Jun 2016	475	1,292	3,748	13,482	221.97 MB
Jul 2016	399	933	2,042	10,053	238.26 MB
Aug 2016	397	903	1,769	15,311	295.30 MB
Total	1,656	4,506	11,405	51,409	1,008.71MB

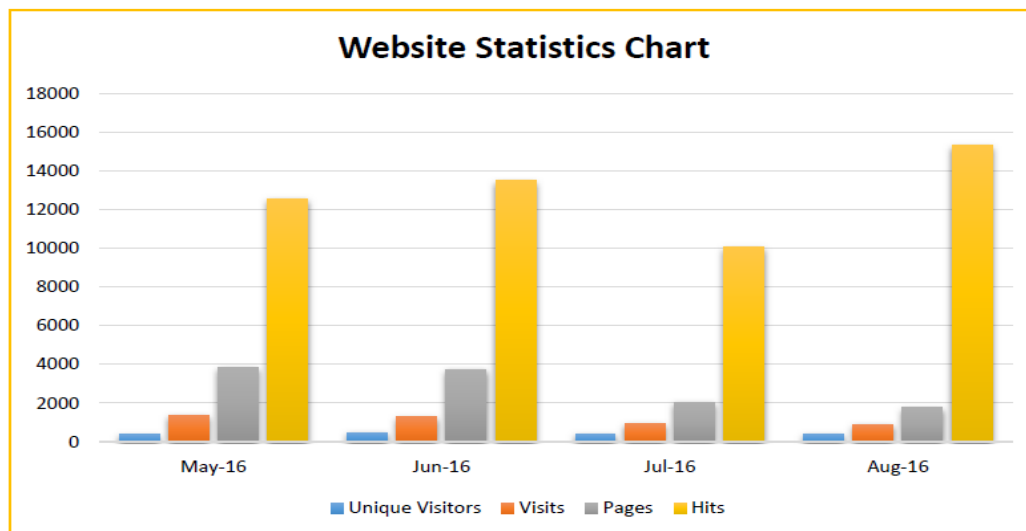


Figure 2 . Website Statistics for APRNet Website from May to 24th August, 2016

From Figure 3 it is indicated that unique visitors to the websites increased from 303 at the end of April, 2016 to 385 by May, 2016; increased further to 475 by June, and slightly dropped to 399 and 397 by July and August respectively. We cannot say it dropped by August because at the time of filing this report August still remained about 7 days to the

end. Overall the season witnessed a general increase in unique visitors as the total for Q2 report was 1040 by end of April, 2016 while this figure increased tremendously at the end of August with 1656 unique visitors. Number of visits quadrupled from 1040, by end of April, 2016, to 4506 at the near end of August. It could be recalled that the page hits rose from a dismal 679 in January 2016 to a very high and impressive level of 5,717 by the end of April, 2016. The hits rose from 2,764 to a record level of 11,923 at the end of April, 2016. From May to August, the hits rose again dramatically from 11,923 in the Q2 to 51,409 by the end of August. This is a record hit figure for APRNet website. The bandwidth which increased from 182.7MB in January to 202.01 by end of April, 2016 reaching a total of 901.1 MB for the Q2 season surged forward again to a total of 1008.76 MB by the end of the Q3.

The foregoing figures again attest to the rising interest the public is having in the activities of APRNet coupled with the drive by the EXCO led by Dr. Tony Onoja, to publicize and revive the network since assumption of office in November 2015. The EXCO in cooperation with the President and the congress were able to make this happen under the encouragement of IFPRI via Dr. George Mavrotas and John Mazunda.

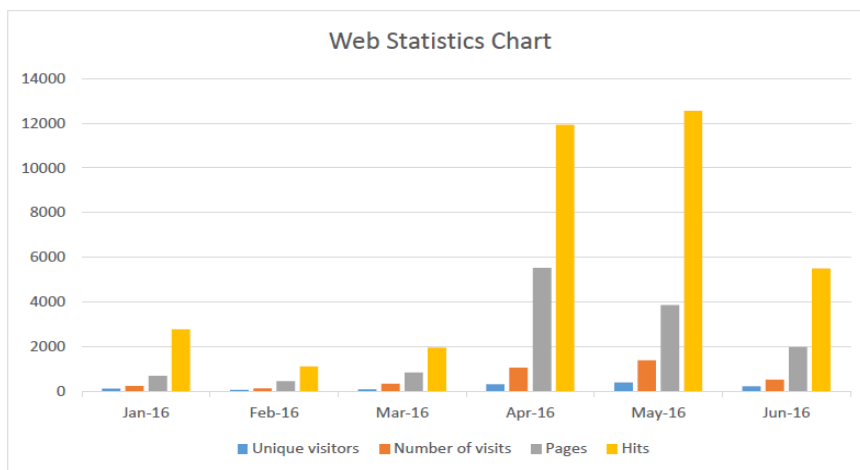


Figure 2 . Graphical View of Website Statistics for APRNet Website from January to 12th June, 2016.

There is obviously an increased boost in the confidence level of members of APRNet now with APRNet getting more publicity and visibility in different media. The leap in visibility are also buoyed by the successful presentation of the journal and the stakeholders' forum on making research work for end-users. The President and EXCO, in addition to the above plan, will sustain the trend through increased publicity of our

activities as well as increased membership drive. APRNet EXCO shall also make use of the social media (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and tweeter) to boost the visibility of our website and network activities.

The web metrics from the month of July 2016 to November, 2016 are presented in Table 3 and Figure 3.

Table 3 Web Visibility Index of APRNet Website

Month of Visits	July, 2016	August, 2016	September, 2016	October, 2018	November, 2019
Unique Visitors	399	508	405	392	533
Number of Visitors	933	1274	990	994	917
Pages	2042	3302	17910	34863	6776
Hits	10058	19773	26798	41942	12275
Bandwidth visitors	238.26	364.22	304.42	290.27	140.29

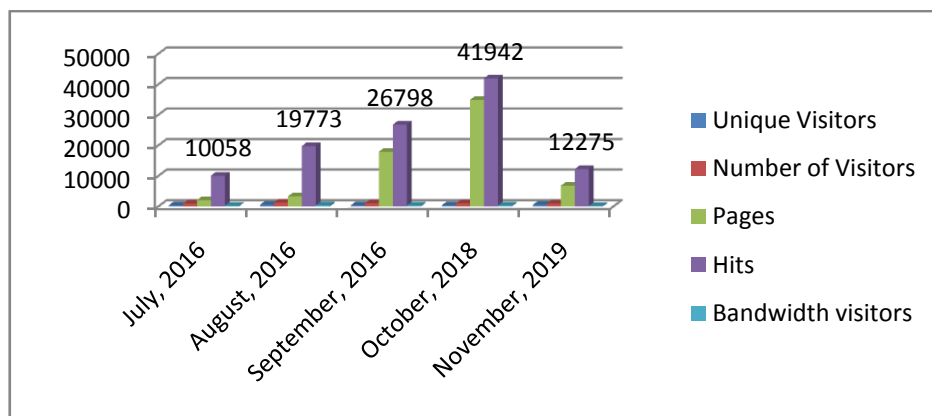


Figure 3: Web Statistics of APRNet Website from July to November, 2016

During this period, the unique visitors to our websites increased from Unique Visitors 399 in July to 533 in November (even though the month of November is yet to end at the moment of filing this report). Similarly, we found that the web site hits increased from 10,058 in July and peaked in October with a record 41,942 hits before reaching 12,275 in middle November. The visibility of APRNet website is increasing and this is a reflection of how the organization is getting noticed and interest. We hope to step up this feat.

APRNet Partnered with IFPRI/Feed-the-Future Programme to Head a Panel Session at the International Conference organized by Feed-the-Future Project

The Feed the Future Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project is a five year initiative funded by the Nigeria Mission of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and implemented jointly by Michigan State University (MSU) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) our facilitator. In late September (27 & 28 September 2016) APRNet selected 3 teams of researchers whose papers were ready at short notice and who were financially up to date to present papers in a panel session given to APRNet at the above mentioned international conference held at Rock View Hotel, Wuse 2, Abuja.



From left, Dr. Oyinkan Tasié (MSU Team member from USA); The President of APRNet and next to him is the Professor leading the Michigan State University delegation from USA and two APRNet Panellists (Dr. Ibisime Etela and Professor Achike) during the Feed-the-Future Conference held in September, 2016 at Abuja.

Four papers were successfully presented by APRNet members at the event. The papers were presented by Mrs Toyin Ajibade et al, Ms Amaka NNaji et al, Dr.Ibisime Etela et al and were all fully funded (travel grants/accommodation & per diem) to attend. Three EXCO members including the Ag. President (Dr. Tony O. Onoja), Treasurer (Prof. PC Ike) and Vice President (Dr. Gloria Ujor) were the panellists. They were also present at the invitation of IFPRI/Feed the Future on behalf of APRNet. We thank IFPRI and Feed the Future programme for this opportunity for positive collaboration.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

APRNet, within the period, had to disengage the service of the Program Manager owing to inability to fund the payment of his salaries. Given this development there was a heavy burden of secretariat duties being borne by the acting President and other EXCO members. To worsen the situation, APRNet's office space offered by IFPRI at Abuja was relinquished as a result of the disengagement of the programme officer. Consequently, the network had to distribute her office documents and wares across homes of some EXCOs residing in Abuja and Port Harcourt, leaving it with no physical secretariat at the moment. APRNet is in dire need of a Secretariat presently. There was also the challenge of late approval of budget by IFPRI which made it very difficult for APRNet to start its earlier scheduled programmes on time. This has resulted in the inability to take off with the journal launch on time as well as delay in carrying out planned events. Never-the-less the preparations APRNet, with the strong support from IFPRI was later able to conduct all the planned activities as supported by the budget. APRNet suffers from inadequate funding to embark on programmes that will carry along all members of the Network such as capacity building programmes and funded conferences of international standard. We also witnessed the challenge of poor participation of members in our programmes as well as poor payments of their subscriptions. This was discussed again during our AGM and the members felt there was need to fund members to participate in its events to give more members a sense of belonging. There were constant cries by our members to embark on programmes that will involve every member in order to boost their morale. In line with this, the idea of hosting an international conference and capacity building programme is being nursed by the EXCO for the next fiscal year. On the positive side, funds were released by IFPRI, our facilitator, to carry out the projects in the budget and programmes for the year. The EXCO had not rested on its oars in successfully delivering the deliverables for the year.

Given the necessary cooperation with IFPRI, members of the public, government and international donor communities, as well as motivated members, APRNet plans to do even better than the previous year ending today. APRNet looks forward to engaging in more collaborations with international donors and institutions to jointly conduct conferences, engage in capacity building projects for its members, source for research grants and embark on projects that are in tune with its objectives. We are at the moment

building a more dynamic and state of the art website with improved features that will enhance the visibility of our network alongside its products (especially the journal) and major activities. Our blog sites will soon be fully operational and we plan to contribute more meaningfully to policy improvement and advocacy for enhancement of food security and agricultural development in Nigeria and Africa come 2017. We need committed members experienced in writing fundable research reports and experts who can be engaged for capacity building programmes as well as international research of high value. Finally we thank IFPRI-Nigeria, ably led Dr. George Mavrotas (with his assistant, John Mazunda), for their encouragement and strong support all through the year and through the activities of APRNet. We remain grateful too to all members of APRNet and the entire stakeholders interested in APRNet activities. We have not forgotten you, Agro-Nigeria (led by Richard-Marks). They have also been very kind to us especially in publicizing our activities. May you all be richly blessed.

Thank you all.



Dr. Anthony O. Onoja (PhD) MIAAE, MAAAE, MNAAE, JP.

President, APRNet