

‘Nigeria Can Make N12bn Annually From Avocado Export’

The Avocado Society of Nigeria has urged the government to deploy resources toward harnessing the development of Avocado as it has export potentials of generating N12 billion annually for the country.

The chief executive officer of the group, Ambassador Adeniyi Bunmi, in an exclusive interview with LEADERSHIP, said Avocado is currently doing very well in southern and central parts of the country but not on commercial basis.

Speaking with LEADERSHIP, he said because farmers currently do not have access to funds, the Society is helping to set up some farms for members across the country.

He said: “This is majorly in South East, South West and South South states, in particular Imo, Ogun, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Cross river and Oyo. Some farms are available but less abundant in Lagos, Bayelsa, Taraba and Rivers state.

“Avocado is very marketable in the country because of its numerous health and nutritional benefits. The fruit has been doing well in our neighboring countries, most especially Kenya, who are in the top ten of exporters of the fruit in the world. Marketing the fruit is part of the responsibility of the association.”

According to the CEO, Avocado in Nigeria has the capacity of generating over 12 billion naira annually, both from industrial use and exportation. He said that the profitability of avocado is higher than many other tropical fruits.

“In 2018, Kenya exported around 72 thousand tons of avocados which is valued at approximately 118 million dollars. Fortunately for us, the demand for avocado is set to rise. Consumers of Avocado in China Europe and USA are increasing vastly. I can assure you that Nigeria



is set to make a lot of fortune from exporting Avocado. In 2019, USA despite her big production of avocado still imported \$2.35 billion worth of fresh avocados.”

Other importers include Netherlands, France, Canada, Spain, Germany and Japan. What I’m sure of is that we can earn more if the capacity and the potential of the fruit is well harnessed” he added. If well harnessed, Avocado farming will generate jobs for farmers and pickers and employment will also emerge off the farm.

“Based on the interesting feedback and enquiries that we’ve been getting, I can confidently say that over 3000 hectares of Hass avocado farm will be up and running between now and 2021 which will attract around 10,000 direct and indirect jobs because we are building the capacity of our farmers to produce premium organic Hass avocado plantation.

“Jobs will also be created in our cities in the area of storage, processing, logistics while restaurants and other related services we have no choice but to key in by serving different highly nutritious and healthy Hass Avocado recipes,” Bunmi stated.

Providing analysis and cost implication of going into Avocado farming, he said if a farmer acquires 150 premium grafted Hass Avocado seedlings on an acre and adopt a 17 feet, ft by 17ft plant spacing, and with a seedling currently costing N2000, the farmer therefore need N300,000 as total cost of seedlings for an acre.

In addition, farm layouts, pegging, digging and planting is N400 per seedlings making N60,000.

As for processing, Bunmi said the major equipment is the oil presser and burner. To start Hass Avocado processing center, you need around N2 million” he calculated. Bunmi identified another issue that farmers might encounter as quality control.

According to him, post harvesting operation in Hass Avocado is wider and technical than most other fruits. Poor quality will lower the prices of the fruit and even cause many other defects on the fruit. We will really make sure that our members maintain good quality production.



He said that the quality of Avocado is often diminished along the packing and marketing processes, as temperature and injury are the main causes of loss in the Avocado production.

The association, he noted, will give a comprehensive guide on how to properly handle and package the fruit to all her members and that apart from quality, the Association will give members in-depth information on packaging, quantity, delivery and price during our quarterly members capacity building program.

Nigeria, he said, is currently not even on avocado producing nation in Africa not to talk of exporters and because of lack of storage and processing facilities, the loss comes from its post harvesting, which could be through poor handling of the fruits or through poor packaging.

“Knowledge is very important for anyone that wants to do agriculture. Its loss could be in millions of dollars but the association will be training farmers on how to minimise risk and loss.

Another factor that could result to loss is lack of collaboration. Exporting the fruit is the most profitable approach to selling it. It will definitely be hard for an individual to export it as it stands and that’s one of the bridges the association is looking forward to fill”, he said.

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