

Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project Highlights

March 2019

Scholar Program 36

THE “R” LUNCH!

Any one that has been a visiting scholar at MSU under the Nigerian Agricultural Policy Project has a perception of Prof Michael Olabisi being synonymous with the statistical package ‘R’. True to that perception, our lunch meeting on the 8th of February 2019 was supposed to be an extension of the R discussion. Prof. Olabisi, myself, Mrs. Hephzibah Onyeje Obekpa and Mr. Chukwudi Charles Olumba were supposed to discuss R and map out the best approach that would satisfy all of our needs which ranged from analysis in food security, to urban agriculture and land use and then policy analysis.

It was our first experience of a basic full course meal with the strange “soups” and “sauces”. This is something we were not familiar with back home in Nigerian. I must say, I now appreciate the simplicity and rich taste of Nigerian dishes! On getting to the eatery, the names of the dishes sounded outlandish to us. For me, what stood out from all the exotic names mentioned was Sushi! That was a dish I would love to taste because I have heard so much about it. Since we could not make sense out of the menu handed to us, we gladly left the choice of the dishes to Prof. M. O. however, not before requesting that he includes sushi in the order. Even before the orders arrived, our conversations had taken a momentum. Discussions on R diverted to other interesting research areas stretching from exciting approaches to research to checking the robustness of a result. We had a good lecture on how to think out of the box in search of a good research question. He was kind enough to offer advice on how we can deal with the pressure of our studies and the timely delivery of work as expressed in our scope of work.

In between these academic discussions, Prof. Olabisi took time to demonstrate to us how to use the chopsticks. A clash of cultures I was thinking because surprisingly we were practicing using chopsticks for the first time in Michigan and not in China! By the time our sushi lunch was over, we

were a lot better off because it was much more than a lunch; it was a whole new experience.

To scholars out there, next time a Professor asks you to discuss an issue over lunch, do think twice before declining for you will not only be filling your stomach but your mind with lots of amazing ideas in research.



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