**AN**

**ASSIGNMENT**

**ON THE TOPIC:**

**ARABLE CROP PRODUCTION IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTIVE IN NIGERIA ECONOMY**

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**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Arable crops:** Arable crops, also known as field crops, are cultivated plants that are grown primarily for agricultural purposes.

**Present:** this relates to now, for the time being currently.

**Future:** this refers to the time ahead or moments yet to be experienced.

**Prospective:** this term refers to events likely or expected to happen and anticipated.

**Economy:** this refers to the system of production, distribution and consumption in respect to a particular region.

**AN OVERVIEW OF ARABLE CROP PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA**

Arable crops, also known as field crops, are cultivated plants that are grown primarily for agricultural purposes. These crops are typically cultivated on land that has been cleared of natural vegetation and prepared for cultivation. The term "arable" refers to the suitability of the land for plowing and cultivation.

Arable crops play a crucial role in global food production, as they form the backbone of staple food production systems worldwide. These crops provide essential food, feed, fiber, and fuel resources for human and animal consumption, as well as for various industrial applications. They include grains, oilseeds, legumes, fruits, vegetables, and cash crops cultivated for their economic value. The cultivation of arable crops involves a range of techniques including land preparation, seed selection, sowing, irrigation, fertilization, pest control, and harvest. Sustainable practices, such as crop rotation, intercropping, and integrated pest management, are often employed to maintain soil fertility, reduce erosion, and minimize environmental impacts. The importance of arable crops can be understood by considering their contribution to global food security. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, arable crop production needs to increase by around 60% by 2050 to meet the food demands of a growing global population. Arable crops provide essential nutrients, calories, and sustenance, particularly in developing countries where people heavily rely on staple crops for their daily diet. In addition to providing food, arable crops are also used for feed production, supporting livestock and poultry farming industries. Grains such as maize, wheat, and barley, along with oilseeds like soybeans and sunflowers, are major components of animal feed. Moreover, arable crops contribute to biofuel production, providing renewable energy sources as they can be converted into biofuels like ethanol and biodiesel. Arable crop production in Nigeria plays a significant role in the country's agriculture sector and economy. Nigeria, with its favorable climate, diverse agro-ecological zones, and vast agricultural potential, has the capacity to produce a wide range of arable crops. Arable crop production in Nigeria is diverse, encompassing staples such as cereals, legumes, vegetables, and fruits. These crops are cultivated for subsistence as well as commercial purposes. The major arable crops produced in Nigeria include maize, rice, sorghum, millet, yam, cassava, beans, groundnut, cowpea, vegetables (such as tomatoes, peppers, and onions), and fruits (such as banana, mango, and citrus).

* Maize: Maize is one of the most important arable crops in Nigeria, serving as a staple food and a raw material for various industries. It is cultivated mainly in the northern and southwestern parts of the country.
* Rice: Rice production has gained significant attention in recent years due to efforts to reduce dependence on imported rice. Nigeria has vast areas suitable for rice cultivation, particularly in states like Kebbi, Niger, Ebonyi, and Anambra.
* Yam: Nigeria is the largest producer of yam globally, with over 70% of the world's yam production occurring in the country. Yam cultivation is prominent in states like Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau.
* Cassava: Cassava is widely cultivated in Nigeria, serving as a major source of food and raw material for industries. The southwest, southeast, and central regions are significant cassava-growing areas.
* Sorghum and Millet: These crops are primarily grown in the northern states of Nigeria and are used for food, animal feed, and brewing industries.
* Beans and Cowpea: These legumes are important sources of protein in the Nigerian diet and are cultivated in various states across the country.

**ARABLE CROP PRODUCTION IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTIVE IN NIGERIA ECONOMY**

Nigeria has favorable climatic conditions and abundant arable land, making it suitable for crop production. The agricultural sector, including arable crop production, accounts for a significant portion of the country's GDP and employs a large percentage of its population. The major arable crops cultivated in Nigeria include maize, rice, sorghum, millet, yam, cassava, beans, cowpea, and vegetables. Cereal crops, such as maize, rice, sorghum, and millet, are staple foods for Nigerians and have been the focus of government policies to achieve self-sufficiency. However, several challenges exist that affect the present and future prospects of arable crop production in the country.

1. **Present Challenges:**
2. **Low productivity:** Despite the agricultural potential, Nigeria still faces low crop yields compared to global standards. This is primarily due to the use of outdated farming practices, limited access to modern inputs (seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides), and inadequate agricultural extension services.
3. **Limited Access to Land:** Rapid population growth and urbanization pose challenges to arable crop production as agricultural land diminishes. The expansion of cities and urban areas often encroaches upon fertile land, limiting the availability of arable land for farming.
4. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Poor rural infrastructure, including inadequate irrigation systems, storage facilities, and transportation networks, hinders the efficiency of arable crop production. This results in post-harvest losses, reduced income for farmers, and limited market access.
5. **Climate Change and Environmental Degradation:** Nigeria is susceptible to climate change impacts such as irregular rainfall patterns, increased droughts, and flooding. These effects can reduce crop yields and destabilize agricultural systems. Additionally, land degradation, deforestation, and soil erosion further compound the challenges faced in arable crop production.
6. **Pests, Diseases, and Weed Infestations**: Various pests, diseases, and weeds pose significant threats to arable crop production in Nigeria. Inadequate access to quality seeds, lack of pest control measures, and limited knowledge on integrated pest management contribute to yield losses.

**B. Future Prospects:**

Despite the challenges, the future prospects for arable crop production in Nigeria are promising. Several initiatives and interventions are being implemented to enhance productivity and transform the sector:

1. **Technological Advancements:** The adoption of modern farming techniques, precision agriculture, and digital technologies can improve crop yields, reduce post-harvest losses, and enhance efficiency in arable crop production. The integration of new technologies, such as precision farming, drones, and remote sensing, can significantly improve arable crop production in Nigeria. These technologies offer better monitoring of soil conditions, pest management, and efficient use of water and resources.
2. **Research and Development:** Continuous research and development efforts to develop high-yielding and climate-resilient crop varieties, along with improved farming practices, can revolutionize arable crop production in Nigeria.
3. **Improved seeds and inputs:** The availability of high-quality seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals, and machinery can enhance crop productivity in Nigeria. Emphasizing research and development in breeding improved crop varieties that are resilient to pests, diseases, and changing climate conditions will be crucial.
4. **Agribusiness and value addition:** Developing agribusiness and value chain systems can add value to arable crops, create employment opportunities, and improve income levels. Encouraging processing, preservation, and export of agricultural products can enhance economic growth and promote sustainable arable crop production.
5. **Irrigation and Water Management:** Investment in irrigation infrastructure, water storage facilities, and water management practices can mitigate the effects of climate change and enhance crop production.
6. **Policy Support and Funding:** Government policies supporting the agricultural sector, including access to credit facilities, subsidies, and investments in rural infrastructure, can significantly boost arable crop production.

**CONCLUSION**

Despite its potential, arable crop production in Nigeria faces several challenges, including inadequate access to modern farming technologies, limited irrigation infrastructure, pests and diseases, post-harvest losses, and climate change. However, efforts are being made to address these challenges through government initiatives, research institutions, and private sector investments.

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