

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am especially delighted to bring you this issue of the JSDA. A few weeks ago, I visited East Africa (Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda). I taught at six universities in the region, had conversations with governmental and non-governmental (private business folks) and many academics. The central issues of my lectures and conversation were sustainable development, sustainability, conservation, resource protection, and agriculture. I am delighted to say that progress is being made on all fronts but not enough. Since this issue of JSDA is concerned with agriculture, I will focus my comments on it. Research and development (R & D) on agriculture, is progressing rather well on the continent. Some new food varieties such as rice and other crops in Africa are leading the way in improving the diet of Africans. More people are being fed through the improvement in agricultural productivity and governments' efforts to encourage local farmers to produce more subsistent crops are on the rise. Agriculture continues to support the rural economy in Africa. The recognition of this fact by African governments has given rise to more support to farmers by the governments so that the farmers can produce more. The think-tanks like IITA (International Institute for Typical Agriculture) have increased their research effort to provide assistance to farmers. The creativity of farmers is encouraged through government and international efforts. The improvement in the farming techniques have been through the collaboration between the farmers and the scientists. The cultivation methods are improving from shifting cultivation to systems approach to agricultural technology.

Policy concerns and land tenure matters are being seriously investigated and will continue to improve across the continent. The governments of African countries are listening to local people (farmers) and developing the agricultural sector from the grassroots. Chemically based substances such as fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides are being used cautiously as these can harm humans and the environment. The papers in this issue address matters concerning extension work by university, agriculture policy, land use concerns, and local farmer concerns. Improving food production in Africa means investment in research and technology and enhancing policy to deal with matters of land tenure. These papers contribute to the understanding of the agriculture concerns across the continent.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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