



Ronke Yemisi
Aderinboye
2015 AWARD Fellow

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Position	Lecturer I
Institution	Federal University of Agriculture (FUA), Abeokuta
Country	Nigeria
PhD	Ruminant Nutrition, FUA, Abeokuta, 2007
Mentor	Professor Olufunmilayo Adebambo, Director, Federal University of Agriculture (FUA), Abeokuta
Research Area	Provision of year-round forage feeds for ruminants and improving efficiency of the use of these resources, using additives in the diet.

Ronke Yemisi Aderinboye was encouraged to pursue agricultural science by her uncle, who is now a retired Professor in the field of Agriculture. She moved quickly through her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Agriculture before specializing in Ruminant Nutrition for her PhD. “My parents knew there was no better legacy to leave their children than good education, so they ensured that my three sisters and I were properly educated,” she says. “I am grateful for the guidance and encouragement my family provided. As a mother of three, I have also enjoyed the support of my husband in the pursuit of my career.”

Aderinboye’s research at FUA centers on the use of plant extracts in ruminant feed. “The objective is to reduce the heavy dependence on feed antibiotics, improve productive performance of ruminants (meat and milk), alleviate the problem of feed shortage, and increase the incomes of smallholder farmers,” she says.

Most of the livestock keepers in Nigeria are low-income women. “My research is geared toward encouraging these women to adopt unconventional feeding strategies that will solve the problem of food scarcity, particularly at critical periods of the year, thereby easing the challenge of searching for food at critical drought periods—which eventually leads to animals’ low productivity, disease susceptibility, and even death,” Aderinboye explains. “I’m convinced that empowering smallholder women to adopt new feeding strategies will lead to an increase in their incomes.”

Historically, antibiotics have been added to ruminant feed in order to improve the animals’ productive performance, but Aderinboye says this is not a good approach. “Fears of antibiotic residues in

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AWARD is a career-development program that equips top women agricultural scientists across sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate agricultural gains by strengthening their research and leadership skills through tailored fellowships. AWARD is a catalyst for innovations with high potential to contribute to the prosperity and well-being of African smallholder farmers, most of whom are women.

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meat and milk products led to my search for natural feed additives as a replacement to antibiotic feed additives,” she says. “I am encouraging the use of natural plant extracts, which are known as essential oils. I have extracted oil from cashew nut shell, and this is being studied for its potential as feed additive. Although our research is still at the preliminary stage, we have noted a significant reduction in enteric methane production when we add these extracts to the ruminants’ feed.”

Aderinboye is also concerned with providing year-round forage feeds—such as pasture grasses, tree fodder, and agro-industrial byproducts in form of pellets for ruminant feeding particularly during the dry season. “Limitations to the use of these forages by ruminants include their unavailability at certain periods of the year, high fiber and low protein content, and the presence of anti-nutritional substances,” she continues. “The performance of animals raised on these forages is therefore, often below their potential. Aderinboye is conducting this research in collaboration with extension workers, who have been conducting farm trials.

Aderinboye has dealt with challenges in the workplace, chiefly because she has struggled to make her work visible in a male-dominated environment. “But I keep doing my work quietly and they see my success,” she smiles. “There is also the problem of a lack of facilities to enable me to do my work efficiently—some equipment are not available in Nigeria.” She also enjoys working with students to impart knowledge, and is delighted to see her students learning and growing.

As an AWARD Fellow, Aderinboye sees a wealth of opportunities, particularly in the area of strengthening her research skills and developing her leadership capacity. “I’m a shy person, but I know AWARD will contribute to me building my competence in research, along with my confidence,” she says. “It will give me access to new information and technologies, which are sure to help me in my career, and it will empower me to adequately train other younger researchers under my supervision.” She expects to use everything she learns as an AWARD Fellow to contribute even more at her workplace. “I will share my very best ideas, they won’t just die within.”