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Bassey Udo Adiaha Attah and Scientific Agriculture in Nigeria: 1908-1990

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Abstract

Bassey Attah joined the Agricultural Department of the colonial civil service in 1931 as an Agricultural Assistant after his training at the School of Agriculture, Moor Plantation, Ibadan. In 1941, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture from an American university, thus becoming the second Nigerian graduate in the discipline. When he acquired his Master of Science degree in 1943, he made history as the first Nigerian to obtain a post-graduate degree in Agriculture. As a Nigerian pioneer in the field, he introduced a lot of innovations. He contributed to the oil palm grove rehabilitation scheme that enhanced the production capacity of the West African Institute for Oil Research (WAIFOR) and National Institute for Oil Palm Research (NAIFOR). He also introduced many economic crops, grass and seedlings to Nigeria in addition to experimentation on the cultivation of onion in Southern Nigeria as well as special breed of pigs, popularly known as "white land race" and special species of birds known as "Rhode Island Red". In the area of cattle rearing, he introduced a breed from Cote d' Voire and formulated most of the feeds still used in animal production. Although his role remains path-breaking, he has not been accorded significant recognition commensurate with his pioneering scientific innovations in the field of agriculture in Nigeria; hence this paper seeks to correct the anomaly by coherently documenting his contributions to the development of agriculture in Nigeria and positioning him as the "father of scientific agriculture in Nigeria". The paper adopts a historical narrative method.

Keywords: Bassey Udo Adiaha Attah, Scientific Agriculture, Rehabilitation, Oil Palm Research, History

Introduction

Before Nigeria's independence in 1960, agriculture stood out as the most important sector of the national economy. It employed about 80 per cent of the nation's active work force and provided a means of livelihood for about 90 per cent of the population. It was also the most important source of foreign exchange earner. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, agriculture accounted for about 92.7 per cent of the annual value of the nation's exports, while minerals contributed only 7.3 per cent (Ndon, 2007).

Nigeria was the world's leading producer and exporter of palm oil, palm kernel, cocoa, groundnut and cotton. During the period, the country was self sufficient in livestock and fish production and had minimum food importations, mostly in the forms of stockfish,

canned fish, meat, rice, milk and beverages. The discovery and exploitation of crude in Nigeria changed the economic dynamics of the country (Ndon, 2007).

Although the credit for this high profile and sustainable developmental initiative, particularly in the colonial era is usually ascribed to the British colonial officials, some Nigerians who were active participants in the field of agriculture during the period also made significant contributions worthy of commendation and documentation. One of such Nigerians was Bassey Udo Adiaha Attah, a pioneer agricultural officer whose role in the development of the Nigerian agricultural sector has not been properly documented. The paper primarily examines his contributions to the development of agriculture in Nigeria and concludes that in view of his path breaking contributions in the field, he can rightly be described as the "father of scientific agriculture in Nigeria".

Birth and Early Life

Bassey Attah was born on the 8th of August, 1908, in Ikot Akpan Ndua, Asutan Ekpe Clan in the present-day Ibesikpo-Asutan Local Government Area, of Akwa Ibom State. He enrolled in the then Nsit People's School, Afaha Offiong before he transferred to the Duke Town Primary School, Calabar, where he passed his Standard Six in 1926. His solid performance led to his name being inserted in the Honour's Roll of the school. He thereafter enrolled in the Duke Town Middle School for his secondary education and completed in 1928 (Attah, 1998).

In 1928 he applied for admission into the School of Agriculture, Moor Plantation, Ibadan, and was granted scholarship by the colonial government. He studied in the institution for three years. At the completion of his training in 1931, he secured appointment as an Agricultural Assistant in the Department of Agriculture of the colonial civil service. While serving as a civil servant, he began to nurse the ambition to study agriculture in a higher institution abroad (Attah, 1998).

Bassey Attah as an Ibibio Union Scholar

The Ibibio people were the first set of Nigerians to establish a formidable ethnic union with which they used for social mobilisation in Nigeria. The Ibibio Union which was established in 1928 was embraced by every citizen in the then six Ibibio Districts (now Akwa Ibom State). Unlike similar unions which were town unions like Owerri Improvement Union in Port Harcourt (1916), the Egba Society (1918) and the Onitsha Improvement Union, Lagos Branch (1920) all of which only involved segments of either Igbo or Yoruba people (Noah, 1998: 48). Throughout its existence, the Union was effectively used in a constructive way to rally and mobilise the people of the area in progressive programmes and actions in Nigeria (Umana, 2004).

By 1928, it had become clear to the Ibibio people that in order to fit into the new scheme of things created by the colonial situation, they would have to adopt aspects of the values of the colonising power and work for changes within limits imposed by the colonial

authorities. Education along Western lines had come to be seen as the *sine qua non* for all development programmes. The organisers of the Ibibio Union realised that beyond considerations of employment, the acquisition of Western education was by itself self-liberating with potentials of independence of both mind and body. Thus the Union stated that by advocating education for Ibibio men and women (Noah, 1988; Akpan, 2017).

It was in line with this fundamental policy of the Ibibio Union that six Ibibio sons from the six Ibibio Districts including Bassey Attah were sponsored by the Union in 1938 to study in European and American universities. Although this path-breaking agenda of the Ibibio has been discussed elsewhere, it is necessary to state that the following were the beneficiaries of the programme:

Asuquo Udo Idiog - Abak District, Medicine: Canada
 Bassey Udo Adiaha Attah - Uyo District, Agriculture: United States of America
 James Lawson Nsima - Eket District, Education: United States of America
 Ibanga Udo Akpabio - Ikot Ekpene District, Education: United States of America
 Obot E. Antia-Obong - Itu District, Medicine: England
 Egbert Udo Udoma - Opobo District, Law: England

Bassey Attah in the United States of America

Bassey Attah studied Agriculture in Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, in the United States of America (Attah, 1998). The Tuskegee University is a private black university established by Booker Taliaferro Washington, educator, author and African-American civil rights leader. While in the institution, Bassey Attah performed to the envy of the indigenous students because he spent about three years in the first-degree programme. He graduated in 1941, with a Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) Degree in Agriculture. This achievement made him the second Nigerian graduate of Agriculture in Nigeria, the first being the late Cardoso (Edem, 2000).

His academic brilliance won him tremendous respect from the students and authorities of the institution and influenced the massive admission of African into the school. With the acquisition of his first degree, Bassey Attah moved into higher academic height. In 1942, he sought for admission into the Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa for further studies leading to the award of Master of Science (M. Sc) Degree in Agriculture. This achievement made him the first Nigerian to have obtained a post-graduate degree in Agriculture. At the end of the programme, he was appointed a Graduate Assistant in the Institute and he worked there briefly. He also worked as a Research Professor in the State University of Louisiana and performed creditably; measuring up with his peers from other parts of the world. He later returned to Nigeria and resumed duties with the Department of Agriculture as an Agricultural Officer. After a short period of service, he was sponsored by the Department of Agriculture to study Tropical Agriculture at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, Trinidad in West Indies. He finally returned to Nigeria in 1945 (Edem, 2000).

Attah's Contributions to Agricultural Development in Nigeria

In 1931, after his acquisition of a certificate in Agriculture from the Moor Plantation, Ibadan, Bassey Attah was appointed an Agricultural Assistant in the then Department of Agriculture (now Ministry of Agriculture), and he worked in that capacity in various parts of Eastern Nigeria, especially in present day Abia, Imo, Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, and was adjudged to be diligent and astute in the Department. During the period, he introduced some innovations into the agricultural practice which were not in conformity with the traditional methods of agriculture known to the indigenous people. However, with time, the indigenous people came to appreciate the new scientific method of agriculture pioneered by him and accepted his invaluable advice (Attah, 2015). In 1947, Bassey Attah was posted to Quinine Plantation in Isososing, Bakassi in Kumba area of Mount Kupe, Western Cameroon where he introduced cassava to this area and today, cassava is an acceptable staple food in the area (Edem, 2000; Attah, 2016; Akpan, 2018).

It should be pointed out that Bassey Attah's experience in the colonial civil service was not a happy one. While in the Department of Agriculture under the British Officers as an African graduate of Agriculture, the British underrated his status. The reasons for their attitude were not far-fetched. First, the British viewed with disdain, American University degrees. The colonial authorities considered American universities as not measuring up in terms of standards with theirs. Secondly, the British Agricultural Officers and others in some departments in Nigeria like in most African countries during the colonial era who lorded over Africans did not acquire good certificates or degrees in their different professions. These were the major reasons for the Europeans envy of Chief Attah's profile (Attah, 2016).

It appears that the Europeans thought that if they allowed Bassey Attah to climb to their level in the service, their weaknesses would be exposed. For this reasons his progression in the Department of Agriculture was undermined. Up to 1955, after acquiring additional qualification besides his experience in the colonial civil service since 1931, he was only promoted to the position of Senior Agricultural Officer, whereas, as was the practice then, agricultural graduates who assumed office for the first time, were engaged on the rank that was higher than what Attah occupied. Given that he was not fairly treated in the colonial civil service, he retired voluntarily (Ina, 2015).

As a staff of the West African Institute for Oil Palm Research (WAIFOR) now Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NAIFOR), Bassey Attah demonstrated his accumulative knowledge in practical agriculture by collaborating with the Europeans to improve the yielding condition of oil palm in different parts of Eastern Nigeria. For instance, he was responsible for the wide scale Oil Palm Grove Rehabilitation Scheme. To spread the information on this scheme, he employed the services of town criers and went several churches to educate the worshippers on the benefits and the importance of the scheme. His sensitisation programme was well received by many people. This scheme sought to replace

the old unproductive wild palm trees with new and high yielding species. To promote this scheme, government paid the indigenes some allowances for their sustenance while their old and unproductive oil palm trees were being cut down and new and improved seedlings planted. This scheme later brought good oil palm yield in Nigeria (Attah, 1998; Attah, 2016).

According to Usoro:

... in the 1950s, positive change was noticeable in the export production trend for Nigerian palm products. Export production of palm oil and palm kernels increased at an average yearly rate of 14,038 tons and 20,026 tons respectively. This represented an annual average increase of 17.6 per cent and 5.8 per cent for palm oil and palm kernels respectively over the period... These average yearly increases differed from the 2.5 per cent for palm oil and 2.8 per cent for palm kernels in the period 1906-1938. The increase in overseas demand as well as improvements in government policies to promote production induced increases... the introduction of plantation cultivation in the Nigerian oil industry in the period signified a major policy departure before that period (Usoro, 1974: 34).

He also made other contributions to the development of oil palm trees by introducing a formula of administering fertilizer. The formula revolutionised fertilization system in many plantations. It suppressed the former method whereby each oil palm seedling was given individual attention. This scientific ingenuity attracted the commendation of Mr. Toovey, the Director of the NAFOR (Edem, 2000).

Attah contributed significantly in oil palm production in Nigeria through the application of some specialised techniques like; tissue culture technique which led to increase in bunch yields and less variability in bunch composition. He also contributed to agricultural development by conducting researches that helped increased yields of food crops. In addition, he introduced economic and food crops to Nigeria. These included Guatemala grass seedling from West Indies, onion and rice. Guatemala grass is a rich protein food for cattle and other herbivore. The grass which was first experimented in Jos when it was introduced from Guatemala still exists in Nigeria; it promotes animal production in both Northern and Southern Nigeria (Edem, 2000).

The cassava seedlings brought from West Indies to Nigeria by Basseyy Attah after his training in the Imperial Agricultural Institute in Trinidad and Tobago was of high yield and became very popular among Nigerians. Locally it was known as *afia okpo*. It was so called because its stem was always white. The cassava species is still available in Nigeria though the yield has decreased because it is not cultured according to its tradition. For instance, the mulching required by the crop is not normally supplied. Basseyy Attah also

experimented on onion cultivation in Southern Nigeria though the experiment yielded little success. Rice cultivation in Nigeria was the most agricultural controversial projects in his professional experience. He conducted series of researches on suitable species and soil for the cultivation of the crop in Nigeria. The means for cultivation of rice in Nigeria was available, but the execution of the project faced a lot of obstacles from the colonial authorities (Attah, 2016).

The irony of Basseyy Attah's exploits in the area of agricultural research was the belief by the imperialists that once Nigeria starts the cultivation of rice in a large scale, the business of the European merchants would certainly suffer setback. The reasoning of the anticipated setback was because of the fact that the European merchants imported the bulk of rice consumed in Nigeria. The logic of the matter was that the interest of the European merchandise must be protected. Apart from Nigeria, Basseyy Attah as stated earlier worked in Cameroon. At various times, he had established plantations at Tiko, Mamfe, Victoria and Kumba all in Western Cameroon. He left his foot prints in scientific agricultural innovations in the area (Attah, 1998).

In the strict sense of his educational specialisation, Basseyy Attah was an animal scientist. He performed better in animal production. It is on record that he introduced into Nigeria special breed of pigs popularly known as "white land race". These pigs are very large, fat and have high productivity. They are still in some piggeries in Nigeria. These hybrid pigs formed the stock piggery in Asutan Ekpe Community Cooperative Development League farm established in the 1950s. To engender substantial production, white land race pigs were imported from the United States of America and crossbred with the local pigs (Edem, 2000).

Another area that he pioneered is poultry with his introduction into Nigeria of special species of birds known as "Rhode Island Red". As the name implies, these birds were deep red in colour and large in size and could be compared to a medium sized turkey. This popular breed was crossbred with the local fowls. It was known locally as *unen Attah* (Attah's fowl). This breed of bird is now almost extinct. The few that could be found are by far too small to the original size. In cattle variety, Basseyy Attah introduced a breed from Cote d'Ivoire to Nigeria. The bull was called *Ndama*. This specie of cow was very large in size and gentle in appearance but quick in anger. He nurtured the desire to culture the Ivorian *Ndama* in Nigeria and succeeded in cross breeding a few with the local *Muturu* (Edem, 2000).

Attah involved himself a lot in the development of animal feeds in Nigeria. The production of most of the feeds used then in animal production was formulated by him. These formulae were to conform to the climate and condition of Nigeria. It must be noted that most of the exotic crops and animals have mixed up with indigenous species. Thus, the present generation cannot distinguish between the traditional and exotic animals and

The idea of community farms was not embraced by the entire six Ibibio colonial Districts as he conceived. However, because of his firm belief that it would be impossible to embark on any meaningful process of development in any part of Ibibio land without the combined efforts of the people through the formation of cooperative society, he decided to experiment his ideas in Asutan, his own clan. Attah also believed in the harmonisation of the labour of the people of the area without allowing them to move to other parts of the African continent like Equatorial Guinea in search for job opportunities. It should be noted that by the arrangement of the British colonial government and Spain, many Ibibio nationals and other Nigerians were recruited under licence to work in Spanish plantations in Fernando Po as wage labourers. In addition, some Nigerians also ferried labourers into

While Attah was studying in the West Indies, he conceived of the idea of model agricultural farm which could be developed in Nigeria. He presented the proposal to the Principal of the Imperial College of Agriculture, Mr. O.T. Faulkner who was an ex-Director of Agriculture in Nigeria. Mr. Faulkner encouraged him to implement the vision on his return to Nigeria. This encouragement spurred Bassey Attah to synthesise the Ibibio people from the six colonial Districts on the need to participate in the project on his return from West Indies (Attah, 1998).

Bassey Attah as an Entrepreneur

Attah's Agricultural and Related Services After Retirement from the Colonial Service After his retirement from the Colonial Civil Service in 1957, he joined the Eastern Nigerian Development Corporation (ENDC) as an Agricultural Officer for a short time. The Corporation owned many agricultural and related estates in the former Eastern Region (Eastern Nigerian Publication: 1960). In 1960, the services of qualified personnel, especially of Nigerian origin were needed. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and other of his contemporaries approached him and offered him an appointment in the newly established university of Nigeria Nsukka. Bassey Attah accepted the offer in 1961; he lectured briefly in the Department of Agriculture of the University and later became the first Farm Manager of the institution (Attah, 1998).

In the University's farm, Chief Attah displayed his horticultural prowess. Flowers of various kinds and shades were planted in the University in horticultural designs. Both the university staff and students admired the university flower garden and he managed the farm for some years before he was appointed the Landscape Manager by the University. He held this post up to his disengagement from the services of the University in 1973 (Ina, 2015).

For example, the specie of cocoyam with yellowish centre like eggs' yoke was brought into Nigeria from Jamaica (Attah, 2016).

the territory illegally. This scenario resulted in the shortage of the needed labour force to engage in agriculture in Ibibio land at that time (Udoma, 1987).

To actualise his dream of developing his immediate community of Asutan Ekpe, he established the Asutan Ekpe Cooperative Development League. The cooperative society was used in the execution of the oil palm grove rehabilitation scheme. The introduction of the scheme as noted earlier was to enhance the growth of wild oil palm groves with a view to converting them into regular plantation of selected varieties of oil palm to generate adequate supplies of oil palm fruits for mechanised processing. To this end, hundreds of acres of natural oil palm groves were cleared and oil palm seedlings planted under the scheme. The League had a community farm of about 50 acres known as *Inwang Attah* (Attah's Farm). The farm had fly-proof piggery. The farm attendants were trained at the Provincial Farm at Obio Akpa, in Oruk Anan Local Government Area (now a Campus of Akwa Ibom State University). The stocking of piggery was large and the investment by the community league was enormous. In the farm was also a large stocking of hybrid of birds in addition to the exotic breed of Rhode Island Red (Attah, 1998).

The cooperative scheme became a success in Iwawa section of Asutan Ekpe clan to the extent that cooperators from other parts of Eastern Region were sent for training there. In order to expand the project, Attah sought for assistance from many organisations like the Ministry of Trade, Eastern Regional Production Development Board (ERPDB) and the Department of Lands which was to survey the acquired land. He compared the scheme with the Gizeria Cotton Production Industrial Scheme in Sudan. As in Gizeria Cotton Project, Iwawa Asutan Ekpe Community Enterprise Scheme envisaged a tripartite partnership consisting of the Eastern Regional Production Development Board (ERPD), the Community League and individuals within the community. The Eastern Regional Production Development Board (ERPDB) was to provide the capital, supervision and the skill required in running the scheme. The Community League was to provide the initial capital and the land and to accept financial liability to the government. The duty of the individuals within the community was to provide labour and build up their private interest and investment in the project. He aroused the interest of government and individuals by making references to similar successful partnership schemes in places like the Asejire Community Farm in partnership with the Western Regional Production Development Board (WRPDB), and John Middleton Murray's Community Farm (Attah, 1998; Attah, 2016; Edem, 2000).

According to an informant after the establishment of Asutan Ekpe Cooperative Community Development League, Attah guided it to raise funds and acquire the machine which was eventually installed at Ikot Iyan, Asutan Ekpe. With the installation of the pioneer oil mill, and the establishment of a semi-model farm, Ikot Iyan became the first "semi-industrialised" community in present day Nsit, Ibesikpo and Asutan clans. The mill was used in the processing of bunches of oil palm fruits harvested from Asutan Ekpe and

its environs. The factory generated much income for the clan and proceeds touched the lives of the people in diverse ways. To enhance the expansion of the production of this venture, a five-ton lorry was purchased to ease transportation problems. Because of the progress made in the Asutan Ekpe Community Cooperative Development League, the Catholic Mission supported the vision by establishing a school in the farm. The Lutheran Church also promised to establish a hospital in the area. The Cooperative League was also regarded as a model by other groups. It awarded scholarship and other forms of educational assistance to many youth of the area (Eno, 2020).

The Cooperative Development League also conceived the idea of the establishing cooperative agricultural settlement along Calabar-Mamfe road. For this reason, Attah acquired 871 acres of land in preparation for the scheme in Mfamosing, Cross River State. In 1955, the initial 20 acres of oil palm grooves and unspecified acres of oil palm nursery were developed and other cash and food crops were planted. The plantation was equipped with modern agricultural machines like tractors and other ancillary machines, a laboratory and a complete oil palm processing mill was installed. Today, there are hundreds of families living in the Estate and the venture is one of the well organized privately owned plantations (Attah, 2016).

The bane of the quality of Nigerian oil palm was the high content of fatty acid. The high content of this undesired chemical was due to the delay in processing the palm. Often, after harvesting of the palm fruits, it took a number of days before the fruits were separated from the sheaves, and a few more days before the fruits were boiled, pounded to extract the oil. The long period of processing contributed to the high fermentation of palm fruits, hence the presence of the fatty acid which contributed low quality of palm oil. This was the main reason why palm oil was graded in those days. In a bid to eliminate acid from the oil, the pioneer oil mill was introduced in Nigeria. The efficiency of the mill was so high that it took less than a day for a large quantity of palm fruits to go through all the stages of processing oil. However, the establishment of the pioneer oil mill required a large sum of money. In most cases, it was only the government and its agencies that could afford the requirements for its establishment. (Akpan, 2018).

However, the Asutan Community League project has been criticised by some individuals. First it is believed that the problems that faced the venture occurred because it was introduced when the people were not conversant with modern business management skills. Second, the League's resources were used in financing scholarships for at least one student from each of the villages in the community, thus depleting the scarce resources of the league that could have been re-invested to generate more money. Third, the League was not supposed to have ventured into a large scale agricultural project in Mfamosing, Cross River State, at the time it did. Fourth, it is believed that the challenges came because of the fact that Attah, the promoter and organiser of the scheme continued to serve in the public service and could not give the project maximum attention. Also, the provision in

cooperative scheme's law which warranted a shareholder with few shares to have equal voting right with the major shareholders, made minor shareholders, who were often more in number than the major shareholders to vote to the disadvantage of the business affected the running of the business (Edem, 2000).

One issue that became controversial in Asutan was the real ownership of the plantation at Mfamosing in Cross River State. Though some people in Asutan and its environs acknowledged Bassey Attah as a genius because of his foresight in community development, some of them initially asserted that the plantation was owned by the Asutan Community League. However, available evidence debunks the claim and available records show that that the farm belonged to Bassey Attah (Edem, 2000).

Conclusion

Attah left his bold footprints in the agricultural, of Nigeria having served for many years in the colonial civil service. As this work has revealed, his career in the colonial civil service was characterised by many innovations which helped in the development of the agricultural sector as the main stay of the Nigerian economy. When he served as a pioneer staff of the newly established University of Nigeria, Nsukka, he also made remarkable contributions to the growth of the institution. Indeed, his vision for community development was path-breaking. He demonstrated this with the introduction of a viable community agricultural scheme in Asutan Ekpe which helped in the improvement of the lives of his people. He also established one of the first indigenous plantations in the country in Mfamosing, Cross River State.

When the country's supply of palm oil in the international market began to dwindle owing to the participation of Eastern Asian countries particularly Malaysia in palm oil trade in a large scale, Nigeria lost her dominant position as the world's largest producer of palm produce and some other agricultural exports to Malaysia. This was because these Eastern Asian countries cultivated high yielding quality of the crops and also acquired improved method of processing these products particularly palm oil. It was the discovery of the innovations by these countries that triggered the colonial government to change its agricultural policy. Before then, the colonial administration was in the habit of promoting small-scale farming by Nigerians rather than encouraging plantation agriculture. The colonial administration did not make concrete policies towards agriculture in the country because the British did not wish to have the sad experiences they had in South and East Africa because of plantation agriculture. Plantation agriculture requires much land and this meant taking much land from Africans, a situation which usually attracted fierce reactions from the Africans. This change of policy necessitated the opening of large scale plantations in different parts of Nigeria and the Eastern Cameroons in the 1950s. Bassey Attah's ingenuity in this area of national development was tremendous. (Akpan, 2018; Etuk, 2020).

He was a contemporary of some of Nigeria's nationalists and earliest politicians, like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Mbadiwe, Jaja Nwachukwu, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and so on. For instance, it was in 1944 after he had acquired his M.Sc in Agriculture and was going for further training in the field at the Tropical School of Agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago that Chief Obafemi Awolowo went to study Law in the London.

C.O. Taiwo in his book *Seventy Years in the Nigerian Education System* records his encounter with Chief Attah while embarking on the trip to the United Kingdom, thus:

I was one of the Nigerian government scholars who braved a voyage in August 1944, sailing from combat free Lagos to a fierce war zone - London. We embarked on the Dutch troop ship; *Sibajak*. ...*Sibajak* was a troop ship carrying about 98 per cent troops. There were few civilians called passengers, we the students were called simply students, not passengers. On embarking, we were invited to appoint a leader; we appointed Mr. B.U.A. Attah, M.Sc (Iowa), an agriculturist going for further training in Trinidad and Tobago, the only graduate in our group....The students in the ship included Longe, Mordi, Aribisala, S.J.S. Cooney and Obafemi Awolowo...(Taiwo, 1992: 69-70).

However, despite his pedigree, apart from the National Award of Member of Order of the Niger (MON), which Bassey Attah was awarded by the Federal Government, no agricultural establishment/institution nor has a street been named in his honour anywhere in Nigeria. It is obvious that based on his contributions, Chief Attah undoubtedly was "the father of scientific agriculture" in Nigeria. If the innovative and scientific roadmap he set in the field of agriculture had been followed by successive governments, Nigeria would not only have become self sufficiency in food production, but would have been a leading exporter of agricultural products in the world and the challenge of mono crop economy (crude oil) that the country is associate with would have been overcome.

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