

# Nigeria Agricultural Policy Project Highlights

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Scholar Program 42

## MY FIRST SNOW ADVENTURE

Early January, when I arrived in Michigan State, I was keen that there'd be snow since I'd never seen it before. Growing up, I read about snow in books, saw it in movies and wondered how it felt to have flakes of snow falling on my head. It was like a dream come true for me to finally have the opportunity to experience snow. When I was first welcomed at the airport, I kept saying; "OMG! I can't wait to see snowfall! I'm going to be so upset if it doesn't snow!"

Some of you may be thinking, "Ugh, I live in snow and it's such a pain!" Well, I live in a tropical, yearlong summer-like country only experiencing rainy and sunny weather. Snow is something we wished to see and experience. If you live in Nigeria like me or in West Africa like my friends, you'll probably agree with me that it *NEVER* snows there.

Days went by, yet no snow. Just the freezing cold that not only makes annoying noise in my ears but also makes me look *very* fat due to *layers upon layers* I had to wear just to stay warm! Every time my friends or family members see my pictures, we always argue a lot because they keep passing comments like, "Bro cut down on your *diet*, you are already getting *fat* within just a few days of your arrival in East Lansing, Michigan State." Unknown to them, I am only trying to survive. I don't want to make headline news: *NIGERIAN FREEZES TO DEATH IN MSU*.

Another comment, which I did not find encouraging, was "the weather is warm, you are lucky; it is hardly ever this warm early January". If you once told me that, you now know what my smiles translated to. The response in my mind goes this way, "Yeah it is quite warm, I just enjoy wearing multiple jackets for *fashion*!"

Two weeks after patiently waiting for snow, guess what? It eventually *SNOWED* on the 19th of January, 2019. To see something for the first time is to see something in its purest and most childlike form of beauty. I was seven years old again when I saw snow wafting from the sky for the first

time in my life. I saw little flakes of white snow sparkled everywhere falling from the sky. I was mesmerized by how fluffy and light it looks. The snow was floating in the air like a feather and it slowly kissed my skin. It was one of those memorable moments of my life, which I'll forever remember. It was one of those moments I have longed for. This was my first snow experience; so this was huge for me! I told my colleagues, "It's snowing! Let's go out and play." Whether we like it or not, Mother Nature made an appearance in Michigan. It is snowing! The snow is here folks, and it's here to stay until the spring.

My first snowfall was a pretty experience for me, however,

I also shared in the ugly consequences of the snow. One fateful day, as I prepared to go out for the day's business/school, I wore my layers as usual and then came out from my apartment to confirm the warmth the layers provided was up to par. I felt hot; so I reduced the layers. This was a dreadful miscalculation. Little did I know that later in the evening the weather would be **-16°C**.

Around 5pm that day, after studies, I wanted to go to the store in town to get some food items to prepare a special meal (I dreamt of the previous night. Don't bother

asking, I am not saying it!) After getting the items, I was set to go

home. I went to the bus station to catch the bus, however, for some reason that I can't explain I found myself in the wrong bus. On realizing that I had missed my route, I requested to be dropped off at the next bus station (which



Posing in the long awaited snow

was entirely unknown to me). The floor of the bus station was totally covered with snow. It was freezing cold. As I decided to call Uber, my phone went off, low battery! At this time, I could tell that “BLACK MAGIC” from Africa was at work!

I stood on that snowy platform for such a long time that I lost feeling in my feet and hands. Then a voice whispered to me; “RUN!” Immediately, I started running, with no knowledge of where I was running. That day, the snow was my enemy. I stumbled into an accessories store, shivering and grinding my teeth. The sales person kindly offered me a cup of coffee. Five minutes later, I was revived. I was now able to talk. To cut the long story short, I was able to reach my destination, all thanks to Uber. As for my feet, it took days before they were back to normal!

Another bad experience I encountered was the most talked about “black ice”. One has to be very careful of black ice. Safely warned, I judiciously walked to the bus station on an especially frigid day. Little did I know that there was black ice, lying in wait for me just a few steps away. I didn’t see any black substance on the road, I saw only scattered snow patches. I never knew that black ice wasn’t literally black as the name implied. On approaching the bus station, guess what??? I stepped on it and *TRIPPED!* That doesn’t mean I fell. Don’t be hasty to jump to conclusions. By way of warning for *first timers* abroad like me, “Black Ice” refers to “a thin coating of glaze ice on a surface, especially on roads. The ice itself is not black, but virtually transparent, allowing the often black road below to be seen through it”.

#### ***A few life lessons!***

Once you become aware of something, you can’t *NOT* be aware of it ever again. Before that incident, I didn’t know what I didn’t know. **Through personal experience, I came to know about black ice. I also learned that there can be a sporadic shift in the weather conditions the same day (from + to -).**

#### ***It’s all about random acts of kindness.***

The sales person, who helped me by offering a cup of coffee and calling a cab, didn’t have to do anything. The help rendered to me that day may not seem like much but it was much needed by me at that time. I will forever remember that simple act of kindness.

LIFE is short. We are all living on BORROWED TIME. There’s never a good time to do things that are hard to do. Today may be all the time you have. If you want to warm a heart, engage in a random act of KINDNESS TODAY.

By: Chukwudi Charles Olumba



Snow, always in front of my apartment, what do you think???

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