

**Australia Awards Alumni at the Forefront of establishing the Global Poultry Initiative for Cameroon in partnership with the Sustainable Poultry Network (SPN) and Global Poultry Initiative (GPI) all US based not-for-profit initiatives to protect and produce in a sustainable and profitable manner, the resistant indigenous species of birds for local, national and international markets.**

Georges Tennyson Ngu after his course in Livestock Management at the University of New England in 2014, in line with his work plan on return (WPR), founded and is the pioneer Executive Board Chair of the Buea Poultry Farmer's and Allied Industries Cooperative (BUPOFAI-Coop)-Cameroon. The aim is to ensure farmers solidarity for safe and quality products towards poverty alleviation and sustainable development. This cooperative has been hailed as model given that in less than one year after creation they can boast of over 115 members and a share capital of over USD 26000. In a quest to involve other Alumni working in the agriculture sector, health and environmental management, George initiated the come together of Australia Alumni including Eric Ngang (Founder/Coordinator of the Action Group on Governance and Environmental Management-AGGEM) and Iya Blanche (Founder/Coordinator of the Better Life for Women Foundation) to make inputs and actively collaborate in the process of establishing and managing the Global Poultry Initiative for Cameroon as an offshoot of Global Poultry Initiative/Sustainable Poultry Network (GPI/SPN)USA from the 31May to 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2016. GPI/SPN has a vision is to educate, equip and empower indigenous people with the character, knowledge and skills to breed, grow and market poultry that are sustainable, productive and profitable.

It is worth noting that Cameroon is today affected by the Avian Influenza Virus with over 6 million affected birds destroyed and thus a huge loss to both the state of Cameroon and many private investors and individuals especially the two major bird producing regions- the Center and West Regions, estimated at over 64 billion francs CFA. This situation has escalated because the farmers have absolutely no control over the parent stock supplied from the international market and thus a spill over effect to the entire country if the parent is infected. This has been a recurrent situation and authorities and researchers have been slow to make use of the huge opportunity to propagate the indigenous species that are quite resistant to some poultry diseases. Some attempts have been made by the state through fully funded projects to propagate indigenous or local species of birds which have failed mostly as a result of governance challenges and the lack of genuine will. Georges while participating in a Forum in Kenya, came across the head of the Sustainable Poultry Network (SPN), who equally doubles as the initiator of the Global Poultry Initiative (GPI) and expressed his interest to have the team visit Cameroon and explore the possibility of supporting a similar initiative to propagate local indigenous species of birds in Cameroon like was happening in other African Countries where SPN /GPI were actively involved to initiate this process of selection and breeding such as in Togo, Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia. The US based group after inviting Georges to participate in their 2015 National Conference holding at Wilmot, Ohio in October quickly accepted Georges' invitation and the weeklong activities organised by BUPOFAI the team of four from SPN/GPI USA engaged in a reconnaissance survey of Cameroon's Poultry Sector and

the potential of engaging in Sustainable Poultry Production with focus on making use of local indigenous gene pool of birds as basis for production while considering the salient environmental factors (weather, climate, soils etc). In the course of this, interactions we had nationwide with major stakeholders linked to the 5 fundamental pillars of sustainable Poultry Production including; Breeders, Growers, Feed/feeding, Processing and Marketing/education to reflect on this noble course. Officials of the Ministry of Livestock Fisheries and Animal Husbandry and the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation were equally contacted to introduce the officials and the purpose of their visit.

At the end of the meetings attended by the three Australia Awards Alumni facilitated by Jim Adkins founder and chair of GPI, there was a draft road map for the creation of Global Poultry Initiative Cameroon with a planned International Poultry Academy to be held in Buea from 5 - 9 of December, 2016 with over 100 participants expected for the weeklong Academy facilitated by SPN/GPI against the payment of a moderate participation fees. In addition, reflections for the putting in place of a National Service Team to work on pro- borno basis to support the establishment of the Cameroon initiative were also held. It is worth emphasising that the three Australia Awards Alumni work on diverse pillars of sustainable poultry production and bring their expertise on board this initiative. The participating Alumni expressed gratitude to George for taking the initiative to invite other Alumni working in the sector, who shall in the future sign a partnership agreement to work on diverse joint initiatives apart from GPI Cameroon. Georges expressed the need to engage with other Alumni through the Cameroon Australia Alumni Association (CAM3A) to pull on board the diverse expertise in the Association to enhance the success of the initiative. Georges also stressed that this new form of partnership can also be copied by other country Australia alumni organizations to expedite tangible changes in our communities thereby championing the cause and purpose of the Australia awards. George's success story has earned him another short course award in Agribusiness tenable at the University of Queensland, Brisbane to begin on August 08, 2016.

Eric Ngang

President Cameroon Australia Alumni Association