**Aluko Oluwatosin**

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**College of law**

 **A BUSINESS PLAN ON A CHOSEN AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE FOLLOWING THE GUIDELINE IN THE NOTE:**

Agricultural enterprise means those small business concerns engaged in the production of food and fiber, ranching and raising livestock, aquaculture and all other farming and agricultural related industries.

What is a business plan?

 A business plan is essential to have in place before you seek to start up a farm business, no matter what else you’ve done by way of preparation. In today’s world, animal agriculture is more complex and more variable than it was 100 years ago. There are changing markets, high costs, low profit margins, different ways to raise cattle and niche markets.

**LIVESTOCK FARMING**

 Livestock are domestic animals raised in an agricultural setting to produce commodities such as food, fibre, and labour. The term is often used to refer solely to those raised for food, and sometimes only farmed ruminants, such as cattle and goats. In recent years, some organizations have also raised a livestock to promote the survival of rare breeds. The breeding, maintenance, and slaughter of these animals, known as animal husbandry, is a component of modern agriculture that has been practiced in many cultures since humanity’s transition to farming from hunter-gather lifestyles. No universally accepted criteria exist to separate “livestock” from pets or “companion animals” defined as animals kept primarily for companionship.

 Animal husbandry practices have varied widely across cultures and time periods. Originally, livestock were not confined by fences or enclosures, but these practices have largely shifted to intensive animal farming, sometimes referred to as factory farming. Livestock farming is defined simply as the process of breeding animals for the sole purpose of consumption. Animal husbandry which is another name for livestock farming, is a rapidly growing arm of farming in Nigeria, and the primary reason why more entrepreneurial farmers are venturing into livestock farming is its profitability.

There are attributes that are common with livestock farming. These are:

1. Commitment: for any venture in life to be successful, livestock farming inclusive, must be very committed to his/her vision. A successful livestock farmer has to be hardworking. It can be a backbreaking work, and laziness will not be okay. It takes a lot of efforts to care of animals from day one till they grow up to reproduce, you will see that it is not cheap work, though you could employ some helping hands to assist in the managing of the farm.
2. Proactiveness and a thirst for knowledge: one person does not know it all, and for a farmer to be successful, he cannot rely absolutely on his own knowledge alone. There are constantly evolving scientific and business information on how to make livestock farming more profitable and better.
3. Discipline, Doggedness and goal-mindedness: Discipline is required in every business,otherwise a little mistake could wipe out the whole business at once.

 There are different aspects of livestock farming as well as their plans and they are:

1. Fish farming business: this is about the most common and perhaps most hyped firm of livestock farming in Nigeria at the present. It Is estimated that five out of every ten Nigerians consume catfish on a weekly basis, meaning that at the very least 75 million catfish are bought and consumed every week in Nigeria alone. That makes the demand for the product very high. The potentials of catfish farming in Nigeria are endless, and established fish farmers say that it is possible to recoup investment outlay in 12 months.

 For this business, you will need the following:

* 1. A piece of land to construct the pond. You will need to procure the services of a pond construction expert for this.
	2. Borehole and overhead tank: this will serve as the water reservoir for the fishes
	3. Fingerlings: make sure to buy fast growing and disease resistant breeds

 At this point, certain decisions are necessary on,the size of the business, estimate on level of demand, cost of fixed assets involved and Direct cost of production estimate on level of demand, cost of fixed assets involved and Direct cost of production estimate.

1. Pig farming : pig farming has began to become popular among livestock farmers in Nigeria in the recent time. Pork, the meat from pigs is said to be fetching huge billions of Naira annual revenue in Nigeria. Smart investors and entrepreneurs are taking advantage of the huge demand for pork, and since pigs reproduce in large numbers and grow very fast, the sky is the limit. A single pig can litter of as much as 8/10 piglets at a time, making it one of the fastest reproducing live stock in the world. For a start you will need:
	1. A piece of land for breeding: it is advisable to secure a piece of land in rural areas. Land is cheaper there, and the pigs can root around the fields once in a while.
	2. Standard pens: To house pigs. This must have proper drainage to eliminate bad odour and diseases.
	3. Water pool: while this is optional, it is important to note that pigs like swimming and being able to keep cool is necessary for their well beings because pigs are not sweating animals.

Healthy pig farmers are to take care of the following:

Veterinary doctors: secure the services of a vet doctor for regular check up and vaccination as well as feeding and nutrition.

Employ workers: you will need some workers for assistance, as pig farming can be labour intensive.

Feeding: pigs eat a wide variety of food, but they need a balanced diet like humans do. Their diet should contain fibre, energy, protein, carbohydrates, vitamin and minerals in order for them to them to thrive

1. Poultry farming: poultry farming business is part of animal husbandry which is as old as mankind itself. This is good money within the shortest period of time possible. This is made possible due to the quick maturity of chickens and turkeys. Livestock farming presents one of the finest opportunity for entrepreneurs to make money. There is also that overwhelming demand for eggs on a daily basis.

 For a start you need:

A piece of land to construct the pens: Housing is very important for chicken rearing and effective keeping and management. Poultry housing are classified according to scale and management system. Day old chicks and other accessories such as feeders, Drinkers, perches, nests, crates, lighting system and waste disposal.

1. Rabbit farming: rabbit farming is a business that requires less space and can therefore be done anywhere. The capital investment is low. You will however need to have an in-depth knowledge of how to raise the animals, and do extensive market research to determine who your customers are.

 Before you start you need:

Cages or hutches: these should be able to protect the rabbits from heat and humidity.

Feed: this may be processed or edible vegetable and leaves, elephant grass, potatoes and different kinds of herbs.

1. Goat farming is part of livestock farming: Goat farming is gaining popularity in Nigeria everyday. The meat is alleged to be the best kind of animal meat for the following reasons: it tastes good, and traditionally has a lower fat content than chicken does, and a higher protein content than beef does.

 It also has a lot of by-products such as cheese, yoghurt, ice cream, and butter. These are the reasons goat farming is considered by wise farmers as a lucrative venture and its inreasingly becoming very popular among modern farmers in Nigeria.

 Before starting your own goat farming business in Nigeria, you will need :

* 1. A piece of land of pasture: acquire a good grazing ground that grows plenty of grass varieties. Goats need a large expanse of land, because they move a lot while grazing.
	2. Appropriate fencing: construct short perimeter fence around your pasture or barb wire fence.
	3. Housing: goats like to stay indoors when the weather is not conducive e.g too hot or raining.

Species of goats: There are a large number of goat breeds suitable for different purposes of rearing. Some are very good for milk production while some are good for the meat. Choose what is appropriate for your commercial purposes. Once decided, buy healthy kids.

Veterinarians- you will need to have appointment with a veterinary Doctor near you for periodic check-up and vaccination.

1. Cattle rearing farmer: cattle farming is the process and practice of raising and nurturing cattle from birth until the point at which they provide meat or milk for consumption. The reasons why cattle farming is lucrative in Nigeria are not hard to imagine. One, we are a nation of beef consumers. And two, although cattle are raised primarily for beef dairy products, cow hide, cow horns, bones, hooves, and stearic acid.

 Cattle farmers basically raise cattle either to sell as a whole or sell their products.

For cattle rearing business in Nigeria you will need:

Farmland: A very large piece of land

Farm equipment

Cow sheds

Feeding and watering equipment

Healthy calves

 Then you have to consider the following:

Cattle business model: most farmers either go for dairy operation model or beef production business model. Diary operation business model is raising cattle primarily to sell their dairy products – especially milk. Beef production business model is raising cattle primarily for beef consumption. Whichever model you decide on plays a key role in determining the farm equipment you will need.

Climate: Be sure that rainfall, relative humidity, temperature, all have sorts of rules guiding cattle ranches. You will do well to consider these policies before purchasing the land .

Breed: there are so many known breeds of cows. Your cattle business model should be put into consideration before deciding on your choice of cow. It sure doesn’t make sense to settle for beef cows when your intended model is dairy production. There are two breeds traditionally reared in Nigeria and they are zebu and taurine.

Veterinary Doctors: always have a vet doctor on call who will help with vaccination, birthing, feeding and treatment.