RSM2SNF at the NIFST Conference in Abeokuta

The RSM2SNF project team participated in a conference of the Nigerian Institute of Food Science and Technology (NIFST), at their 9th Regional Food Science and Technology Summit (REFOSTS) on June 6 2023. Participants at the event included Prof Saweda Liverpool Tasie, the Lead Principal Investigator, the project's food safety lead Prof Obadina, an early career scholar on the project, Ms Itohan Martins (working on food safety issues in Nigeria), Mrs. Grace Amadi (the Project Management Assistant), traders of vegetables as well as researchers and academics from various parts of the country.

During this event, the RSM2SNF research team made a presentation about the project and its Food safety related components. The project also provided an update on co-creation activities related to food safety and some preliminary results from ongoing research on the importance of trader handling practices for providing safe vegetables in Nigerian retail food markets.

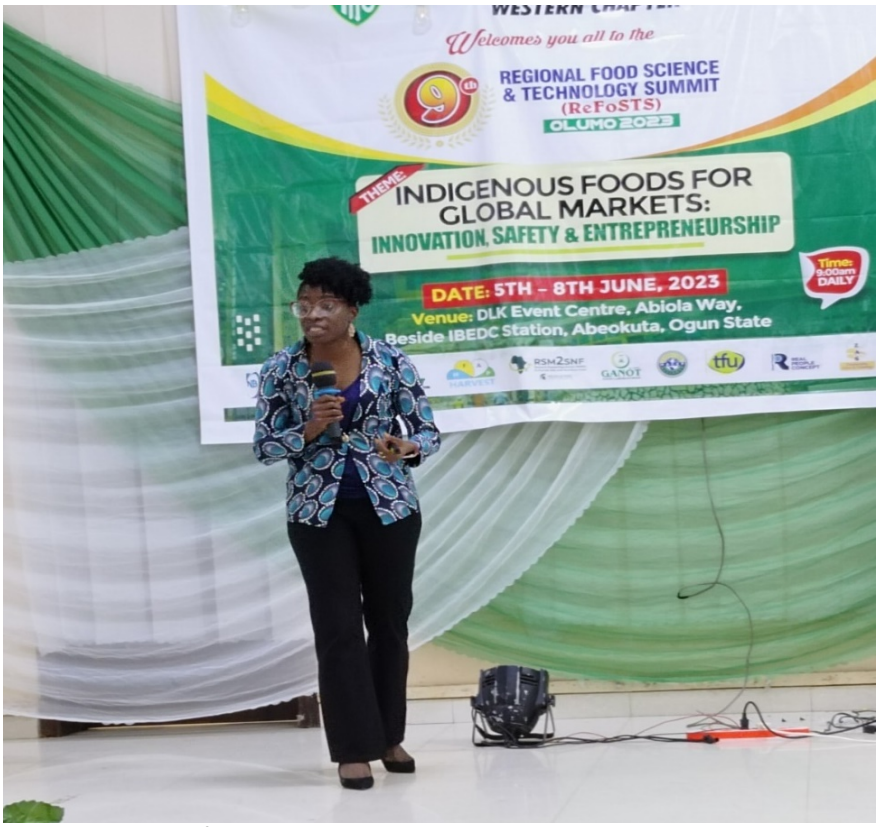

Fig 1: Prof Saweda Liverpool Tasie during her presentation

The PI presented the aims and objectives of the RSM2SNF project followed by an overview and an update of project work done so far; particularly those related to food safety. She stressed the importance

of effective collaboration among researchers to allow for good cross cutting research work and expressed her confidence that such collaboration would make for more robust research outputs.

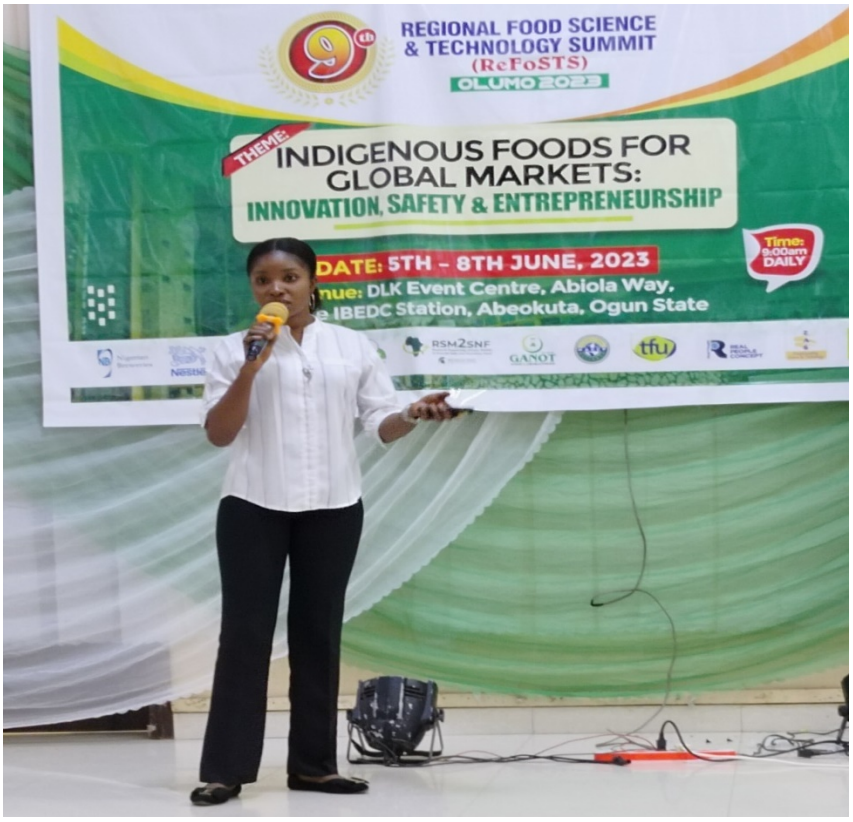

Fig 2: Early career scholar Itohan Martins delivering her presentation

Ms Itohan presented some of her work on food safety and vegetable traders that is co-sponsored by RSM2SNF and the MSU Global Scholars program under the mentorship of Prof. Obaina and Prof. Liverpool-Tasie. In her presentation on the "Safety and Hygienic Practices of Selected Vegetable Vendors within Ogun State" she gave a report on the analysis of data collected on a sample of 174 traders from 9 markets across the 3 senatorial districts of the state. She also presented the results of laboratory tests carried out on the vegetables and the handling practices of the traders. Below are some key points from her presentation:

i. Some traders do not wash their vegetables before display for sale.
ii. Some others wash the vegetables but do not change water (i.e., they continue to use the same water in the same container all day long).
iii. The presence of fecal indicator organisms such as: *Salmonella spp.* and *E.coli* was confirmed in some of the vegetable samples. This could be as a result of the use of contaminated irrigation water or animal manure as fertilizer. It was discovered that vegetables not properly washed were likely to be contaminated by *Listeria spp*. which is a pathogen from soils.
iv. The probability of finding 0.02 contaminant was significantly higher (by 23 percentage points) among traders who did not change their water compared to those who changed their water while washing their vegetables.

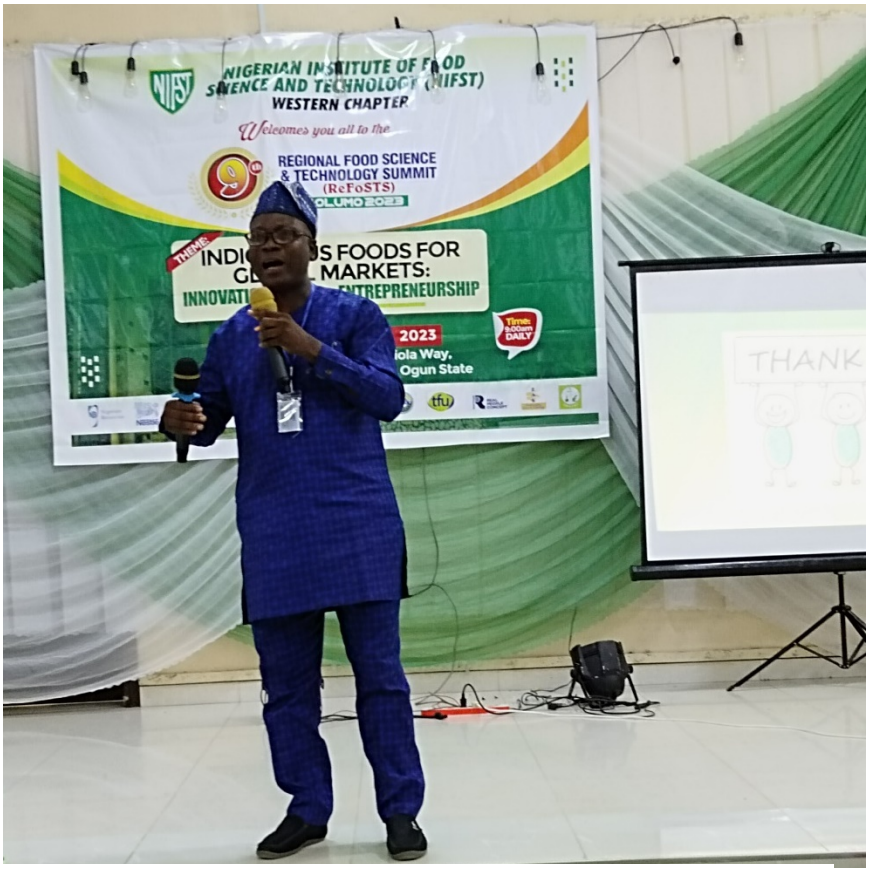

Fig 3: Prof Obadina facilitating a question and answer session

A question-and-answer session was facilitated by Prof Obadina. He encouraged participants to ask many questions and to critique the scholars' presentation. Participants made other comments and contributions to the scholar's report.

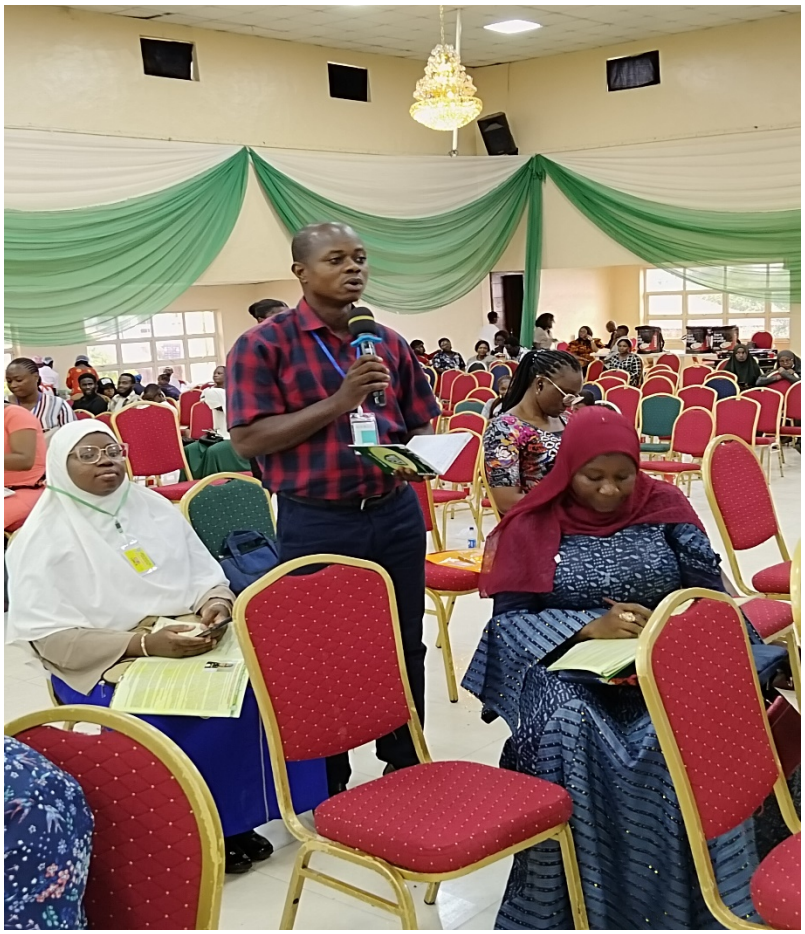

Fig 4: A participant making inputs during the question-and-answer session

In conclusion, the traders were encouraged to not just wash their vegetables but change the water used in washing the vegetables. The project team received a lot of feedback from the participants including the traders present. The traders noted their intention to change the water used to wash their vegetables more than once and to share the information with others.

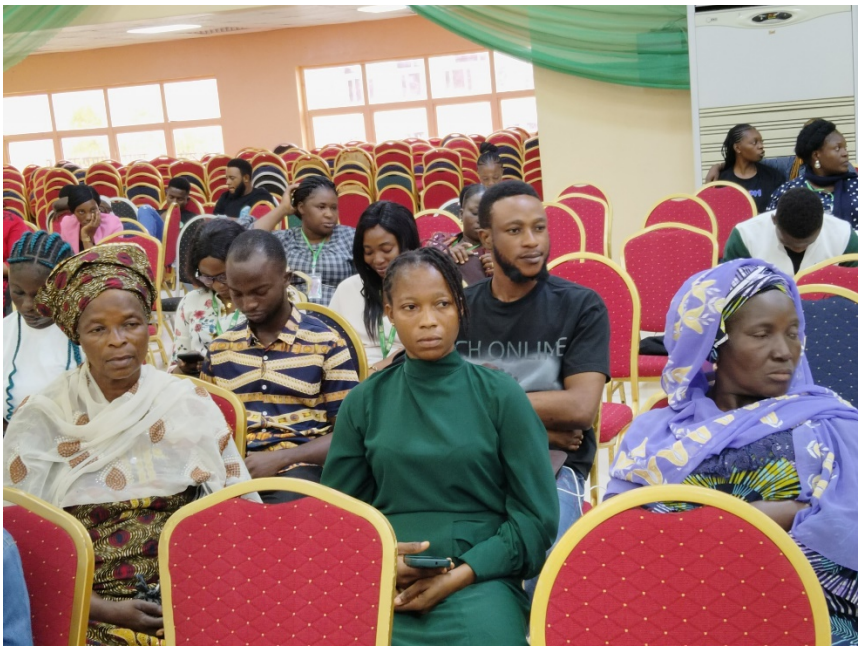

Fig 5: A cross section of vegetable traders at the conference

Fig 6: A small collection of conference participants with the PI.