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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

Climatic change is one of the greatest environmental issues of our time. There is a general consensus among scientists, economists and policy makers that the entire globe is facing a real and serious long term threat from climatic change (Obioha, 2009; Hanseur, Baethgeri, Osgood, Ceceato, et al, 2007). According to Goni et al, (2011), projections by experts suggests that by the end of the 21st century climatic change would have had substantial impact on agricultural production and hence, on the scope for reducing poverty.

The inter-governmental panel on climatic change (IGPC, 2007) defined climatic change as statistically significant variations in climate that persist for an extended period, typically decades or longer. It includes shift in the frequency and magnitude of sporadic weather even as well as the slow continuous rise in global mean surface temperature. The main causes are the increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, particularly carbon dioxide (FAO, 2008).

Climatic change is a change in climate that is attributable directly and indirectly to human conditions. It affects atmospheric condition of the earth thereby leading to global warming. According to Raymond and Victoria (2008), climatic change has the potential to affect all natural systems thereby becoming a threat to human development and survival socially, politically and economically. A comprehensive summary by the inter-governmental panel on climatic change in 2007 stated that human actions are very likely the cause of global warming; meaning a 90% or greater probability is attributable to man. Various activities carried out by man have varying contribution to change in climate system. The burning of coal, oil and various agricultural and industrial practices, are altering the composition of the atmosphere and are contributing to climatic change. This human activity leads to increased atmospheric concentration of the number of greenhouse gases which in turn produce greenhouse effect.

Climatic change is a major challenge to agricultural development in Africa and the world at large. Africa is more vulnerable because agriculture is predominantly rain fed and hence fundamentally depends on vagaries of weather (Watson, Zintower and Moses, 1987) climatic change affects agriculture in several ways, one of which is its direct impact on food production. Ozor, et al. (2010) stated that almost all sectors in agriculture crop, livestock, pastoralism and fishery depend on weather and climate whose vulnerability have meant that rural farmers who implement their regular annual farm business plans risk total failure due to climatic change implication.

The poultry site (2009) reported that poultry production is particularly vulnerable to climatic change because birds can only tolerate narrow temperature ranges. Some of the potential disadvantages of climatic change on poultry include- heat stress in both house and outdoor flocks, reduced egg production and growth rate at higher temperature, higher mortality rate, increase persistence of some endo and ecto parasite, increase in appetite of birds, etc.

#### Statement of the Problem

Poultry production is becoming the first priority of supply of animals' protein sources and is an income generating activity. FAO (2010) reported that nowadays, poultry meat represent about 33% of the total global meat production.

However, poultry flocks are particularly more vulnerable to climatic change because birds can only tolerate narrow temperature ranges. Studies have shown that the level of performance of birds depends on environmental conditions; which includes temperature, relative humidity, sunshine prevailing at a given time, housing system and ventilation. High temperature and humidity for example have some active effect on poultry. Increase of body temperature, decreases feed consumption and feed efficiency, reduction in life weight, high mortality and decrease in productivity and quality of egg (Ozbey and Osellic, 2004). Climatic change poses the challenges of both loss of productivity and increase in cost of production. The question at this juncture is are poultry farmers aware and knowledgeable in climatic change threat? This study is designed to provide answers to these questions and others, relating to climatic change implication on poultry production in Delta State.

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