## 65<sup>th</sup> KUASS (Kyoto University African Studies Seminar)

**Date and Time**: March 8, 2017 (Wed) 15:00-17:00

Venue: #318, Inamori Memorial Foundation Building (3rd floor), Kyoto University

Title:

Improving Native Livestock Production in Ghana for Livelihood Enhancement and Wildlife Conservation

**Speaker**: Dr. Boniface B. KAYANG (Department of Animal Science, University of

Ghana)

## **Abstract:**

Over the last decade the population of Ghana grew by 25% and now stands at 28 million people with an average annual growth rate of 2.5%. This rapid population growth does not keep pace with domestic meat production, necessitating huge imports to meet the shortfall. About 50% of the Ghanaian population depend directly on livestock for their livelihood. The majority of these livestock are kept in rural areas and are of local breeds, often characterized by small size and low productivity, yet they are well adapted to their environment and production systems. Livestock products account for only 35% of meat consumption in Ghana as many people depend heavily on wildlife resources popularly known as bush meat. This situation is of concern because of overharvesting of wildlife through the use of harmful hunting techniques such as bushfires that are detrimental to the natural environment and biodiversity.

To address the imbalance in animal protein supply and the concomitant environmental degradation, we are strategically focusing on improving the productivity of three species of native/local livestock that show great promise: grasscutter, guinea fowl and local chicken. Grasscutter (Thryonomys swinderianus) is a large native rodent of sub-Saharan Africa whose meat is a delicacy relished by most Ghanaians and West Africans. However, it has a relatively short history of domestication and tends to be aggressive. Improving and promoting the grasscutter is expected to not only enhance human nutrition and livelihood but to curb hunting activities and thus ensure wildlife conservation. Guinea fowl (Numida meleagris), which is native to West Africa, is highly valued for its fine-flavored meat resembling that of game while local chickens are kept by nearly every rural household in Ghana. Small-scale poultry production has great potential for alleviating malnutrition and poverty and by ensuring animal protein security it could go a long way to curtail hunting. Moreover, improving the production of these three species of livestock would directly provide income and better nutrition to women and children who typically rear them as micro-livestock. This presentation will discuss a number of research activities aimed at improving the productivity of these livestock species in Ghana.