



## Impact of Banditry and Farmers / Herdsmen Clash on Food Security in Ndokwa–East, Ndokwa-West, and Ukwuani Local Governments Area of Delta State

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### ABSTRACT

Food security in Nigeria is a state where everybody at all times has access to food, this is far from being achieved in Nigeria. This study was conducted to determine the impact of banditry on food security, challenges faced by farmers, and the solutions in the Ndokwa–East, Ndokwa–West, and Ukwuani Local Governments Areas of Delta State. One hundred and fifty-five (155) farmers were used. A purposive sampling technique was also used. Structured questionnaires with forty (40) items of four (4) a point scale consisting of Strongly agreed (SD) Agreed (A) Disagreed (D) Strongly disagreed (SD), with a numerical weight score of 4,3,2,1 respectively was used to collect information from the farmers. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and simple statistical means. A decision rule was established where any item with a mean above 2.50 was accepted and items with a mean below 2.50 were rejected. The farmers disclosed that the conflict between the farmers and herders which has resulted in violence and communal clash has led to the loss of lives of many farmers and also displaced many farmers from their homes and this has added to untold challenges of food security in Nigeria which is a big threat to food production leading to abject hunger and starvation. It was recommended that the host community use community vigilantes in the local government area and negotiate with the Fulanis leaders to reach a common understanding of peaceful co-existence.

**Keywords:** Impact, banditry, farmers, clash, food security

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### INTRODUCTION

In recognition of its size and economy, Nigeria is often referred to as the "Giant of Africa." At one point, the country's agriculture industry was thriving and accounted for a third of its GDP. More than 80% of Nigerians identified as smallholder farmers, who generated more than 90% of the nation's domestic output on 33% of its land (Wikipedia). It is reasonable to ponder if Nigeria is still the "Giant of Africa." Given the myriads of difficulties confronting our agriculture industry, which accounts for a significant portion of our economy, these difficulties include:

Access to farmland  
Climate change  
Lack of funds  
Policy inconsistency  
Lack of modernization and mechanization  
Poor infrastructure  
Insecurity of the Nigerian Farmer

To cite a few. This research will focus on the latter, which is the most recent issue that Nigerian farmers are dealing with. It is particularly destructive to the country since Fulani

headsmen and bandits are attacking farmers and destroying hectares of farmland. To defend farmland against bandits and herdsmen, several farmers have sacrificed their lives. Food, clothes, and shelter are the three basic requirements that humans must meet, according to Maslow (1943). Food was man's primary necessity for existence in the early days when he lived in the forest, without either clothing or shelter. Animals require food but can survive without clothing or shelter. Additionally, plants require food, which they produce on their own through photosynthesis, and animals utilize the food that plants produce.

Food is necessary for survival for all living creatures. Consuming food gives man energy and sustenance, enabling him to carry out his everyday tasks. Energy, which is also obtained from food, is required even when a sleeping man's vital organs, such as the heart, are still functioning to carry out their daily tasks. As far as we can tell, the heart begins its work during the fetal stage (cradle to grave).

A balanced diet is essential for maintaining good health; if one is not eating enough, they experience hunger and malnutrition, which can lead to many illnesses such as anaemia, kwashiorkor, and others (Eze et al., 2013). No country can truly be great in the modern world if it cannot feed its people, and if there is a shortage of food, no significant progress can be made in other areas of life (Lucas, 2007). Beyond the unease of bandits. For many Nigerians, the frequency of their attacks on communities has become an extremely upsetting development.

According to Umaru, (2021), it is fairly obvious that hunger will soon overtake our land and prevent people from accessing the farms due to the activities of bandits and herdsmen. This is what we are gradually experiencing in some of our communities in Nigeria, which is a state of food insecurity. Nigerians are becoming increasingly concerned about the insecurity amid bandits. Their frequent attacks on communities have become a very upsetting trend for many Nigerians.

In the opinion of Onah, (2010), the fact that some rural communities have been abandoned and lack socio-economic development such as good roads and medical facilities could be attributed to the ease with which bandits enter and exit these areas without encountering any opposition. In addition, some of these towns are now home to poorly maintained forest reserves that provide cover for bandits, herdsmen, and criminals (Asiwaju, 2005).

The increasing incidence of herdsmen and banditry. Conflicts among farmers has impacted food and human security. From herdsmen to kidnapping, terrorism, and kidnapping for ransom, Nigeria has been subjected to several security threats since 2019. In Nigeria, this issue keeps becoming worse every day, especially in the rural areas where farmers live. Nigeria's security challenges, primarily abduction and kidnapping, have escalated to the point where no Nigerian media can cover a day without at least one or two kidnapping instances, farmer and cow dying, and farm destruction (Idiris 2021). The fear of cattle

ranchers and robbers has caused farmers to abandon their land, which has exacerbated. In addition to displacing farmers, insecurity has impeded agricultural operations, raising the possibility of acute food insecurity in the nation, which has a negative impact on Nigeria's sustainable development (Luminous 2022). Conflicts between farmers and herdsmen are one of the main causes of food insecurity in the nation. The threat to Nigeria's food insecurity has increased due to bandits' and herdsmen's targeted attacks on farmers and farming communities (Bello and Abdullahi, 2021).

In accordance with World Development Report (1986), food security is the condition in which everyone consistently has access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Is it possible to do this in modern-day Nigeria? The national jingle in the Western world is "Food First." The availability, accessibility, and sustainability of food are all guaranteed. The necessity of having access to food was highlighted by Akinyele, (1993), and this has been emphasized and reiterated. The first prayer that Jesus Christ instructed his disciples to say after expressing thanks to God Almighty was asking God to provide them with their daily bread, even while he was teaching them how to pray. One of the world's biggest issues is food security. Impacts of Insecurity on Farmers on Food Production

### **Impacts of insecurity on farmers on food production**

It has been established that the conflict between farmers and herdsmen has a significant effect on Nigeria's food production and food security since food security entails having sustainable, physical, and financial access to enough safe nutrition and socially acceptable food for a productive and healthy life. As stated by Ijeomah and Wonah, (2022), conflicts between farmers and herdsmen can lead to unemployment, hunger, poverty, and a shortage of food. Socioeconomic life and development will be impacted by insecurity because most farmers are afraid to go to the farm, some have moved to the city, others have changed careers, which has resulted in low agricultural yield, and some farmers have been displaced. Now, national security is the most important public concern. The most prized peace and unity of Nigeria have been challenged by insecurity, which has plunged the country into anguish (Akinseinde, 2014). The aim of this study is to examine the impact of banditry and farmers-herdsmen clash on food security in the Ndokwa-East, Ndokwa-West, and Ukwuani Local Government Areas of Delta State, and identify strategies for mitigating these conflicts and ensuring sustainable food security in the region

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Location of the study**

This study was carried out in the Delta State of Nigeria's

**Table 1:** Demographic information of the farmers in the study area.

S/N	Items	Variables	NO. of Respondents	Percentages %
1	Sex	Males	92	59.35
		Females	63	40.65
		Total	155	100.00
2	Ages (years)	25-35	51	32.90
		36-50	55	35.48
		51-60	28	18.07
		61-70	21	13.55
		Total	155	100.00
3	Educational level	PSLC	38	24.52
		SSCE	45	29.03
		OND	30	19.35
		NCE	33	21.29
		B.Sc.	09	05.81
		Total	155	100.00
4	No. of years in Farming	0-10	18	11.61
		11- 20	33	21.29
		21-30	55	35.48
		31-40	28	18.07
		41- 50	21	13.55
		Total	155	100.00
5	Marital status	Married	133	85.80
		Single	12	7.74
		Divorced	05	3.23
		Widowed	05	3.23
		Total	155	100.00
6	Size of household	0-5	09	5.81
		6- 10	42	27.10
		11-15	51	32.90
		16-20	45	29.03
		21- 25	08	5.16
		Total	155	100.00
7	Are you into Farming?	Full-time	97	62.52
		Part-time	58	37.42
		Total	155	100.00
8	What other jobs are you engaged in?	Teaching	25	43.10
		Trading	20	34.48
		Civil Service job	13	22.42
		Total	58	100.00
9	What type of farming are you engaged in?	Commercial	132	85.16
		Subsistence	23	14.84
		Total	155	100.00
10	What system of farming are you involved in?	Crop farming alone	141	90.96
		Crop farming and animal rearing	12	7.74
		Animal rearing	02	1.30
		Total	155	100

Ndokwa-East, Ndokwa-West, and Ukwuani Local Government Areas. An Ibo subgroup known as the Ndokwa resides in Delta State's Delta North Senatorial District. Another name for the Ukwuani is the Ndokwa people. Farmers make up the majority of the local governments' workforce. They grow vegetables, oil palm, rubber, yam, cassava, maize, plantains, cowpeas, potatoes, rice, and other cash and food crops. However, some of the farmers only raise animals for subsistence.

### Sampling, sampling technique, and questionnaire design

One hundred and fifty-five (155) farmers were used, which comprises both male and female farmers. A purposive sampling technique was also used. Structured questionnaires with forty (40) items of four (4) on a point

scale consisting of strongly agreed (SD) Agreed (A) Disagreed (D) strongly disagreed (SD), with a numerical weight score of 4,3,2,1 respectively was used to collect information from the farmers.

### Data analysis

Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and simple statistical means. A decision rule was established where any item with a mean above 2.50 was accepted and items with a mean below 2.50 were rejected.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in (Table 1) revealed the demographic information of the farmers in the study area. It showed that the majority of the farmers 59.35% were males while the

**Table 2:** Forms of Banditry/Herdsman Attack on Farmers.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
11	The killing of farmers on the farm	4.0	0.17	Accepted
12	Kidnapping of farmers	3.9	0.15	Accepted
13	Reaping women	4.0	0.17	Accepted
14	Engage in stealing farm produce	3.0	0.5	Accepted
15	Burning of farmlands with cigarettes	3.9	0.15	Accepted
16	Seizing of community farmlands	3.8	0.14	Accepted
17	Blocking of roads to farms	4.0	0.17	Accepted
18	Inflict injuries to farms through shooting	3.9	0.15	Accepted
19	Using cattle to overgraze and destroy farmlands	3.9	0.15	Accepted
20	Attack on police and community vigilantes	3.6	0.12	Accepted
21	Uproot crops for cattle feeding	3.8	0.14	Accepted
22	Herders ambush police, farmers, and community	3.0	0.5	Accepted

**Table 3:** Impacts of Fulani Bandits/Herders' attack on food security

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
23	Increases unemployment	3.9	0.33	Accept
24	Increases hunger	3.9	0.06	Accept
25	Increases cost of available food	3.8	0.49	Accept
26	Brings about the migration of youths to the city	3.9	0.32	Accept
27	Brings about fear, stress, and trauma	3.8	0.52	Accept
28	Leads to poverty	3.7	0.40	Accept
29	Leads to loss of loved ones and death	3.6	0.55	Accept
30	Reduces standard of living	3.4	0.38	Accept
31	Increases the importation of food	2.8	0.55	Accept
31	Reduce foreign exchange reserve	2.7	0.48	Accept

**Table 4:** Measures to combat Herders / Farmers clash.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
33	Negotiation with the leaders of the Herders	3.7	0.64	Accepted
34	Use of community vigilantes	3.8	0.28	Accepted
35	Killing of the Herder's cattle	3.3	0.33	Accepted
36	Seizing of arms from unauthorized persons	3.8	0.28	Accepted
37	Border surveillance by security agents	3.7	0.64	Accepted
38	Government intervention	3.9	0.44	Accepted
39	Provide land outside the farmland for the Bandits/Herders	2.7	1.23	Accepted
40	Give part of the community farmland to the Bandits/Herders	2.3	1.38	Rejected

female farmers were 40.65%. All the farmers were adults and youths within the age range of 25- 35 and 36-50 years of age representing 32.90% and 35.48% of the population respectively. This indicates that they are capable, able-bodied with highly dedicated spirit. This is in line with the ideas of Ngosi, (2021) that youths should be involved in agriculture if African countries can ensure food security for the populace. Most of the farmers had formal education with a majority (29.03%) having SSCE (Senior Secondary Certificate Education). 35.48% of the farmers have been involved in farming for a very long time from 21-30 years and most of them are married representing 85.80% of the entire population and they also have large family sizes. 62.58% of the farmers are engaged in full-time farming even though others are in part-time farming (37.42%), Those who are engaged in part-time farming are either combining farming with teaching, trading, or civil service jobs. 85.16% of the farmers are into commercial farming. The majority of the farmers 90.97% are involved in crop production alone whereas 7.74% and 7.29% are involved in mixed farming and animal farming respectively.

The results in Table 2 revealed that the farmers encountered violent attacks from the Fulani

Bandits/Herdsman. Items numbers 11 through 22 rated above 2.50 of the accepted mean value. Massive clashes exist between the farmers and the Bandits/Fulani Herders in the study area. This is in agreement with the discovery of Ladan and Matawalli, (2020) and Ijeomah and Wonah, (2022) that there are devastating impacts of Fulani Bandits/ Herders on Farmers and their entire community. Results in Table 3 showed that all the farmers agreed that the activities of the Fulanis Herders/ Bandits have a lot of adverse effects on our economy most especially on food security which is leading to unemployment, hunger, untold hardship, increase in the cost of living, increased cost of food, fear, stress and trauma on the farmers and their communities. This is in line with the findings of Ladan and Matawalli, (2020) who discovered that herders' wicked and evil art will scare farmers away from taking up farming as a vocation. This also aligns with the works of Ijeomah and Wonah, (2022) that in an environment where there is insecurity, socioeconomic life and development are affected. The data in (Table 4) indicated that the majority of the farmers agreed that the community chiefs should negotiate with the leaders of the Fulanis, kill the herder's cattle, and seize arms from unauthorized persons, they

also established that the government should intervene and also provide land outside the farmland for the Bandits/Herders. Landan and Matawalli, (2020) agreed that governments at different levels should make efforts to tackle bandits to improve food security. It was also agreed that there should be the presence of security agents and vigilantes of the different communities to mount checks at various points in the communities, some of the farmers indicated that they would never give part of the community farmland to the Fulani Bandits/Herders for settlement with a mean of 2.3 which rated below 2.50 of the accepted mean value representing rejection.

## Conclusion

The study's conclusions took into account how herders affect our country's food security. It has been proven that the herders have attacked the farmers frequently, raping, kidnapping, and even killing them. This has put the farmers in danger and caused hunger, migration from farming communities, and unimaginable hardship for the country's economy. To prevent conflicts between farmers and bandits, it was decided that while there should be negotiations between the farmers in the host community and the bandits, security officers and vigilantes from the other communities should also be present to conduct checks at various locations across the villages.

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