



FARMER - CATTLE HERDER CONFLICT: POSSIBLE MITIGATION AND MEDIATION STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

Enwelu, I. A., Dimelu, M. U. and Asadu, A. N.

Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Correspondent contact details: innocent.enwelu@unn.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The paper explored farmer-cattle herder conflict and possible preventable and management strategies to ameliorate the situation. The paper was based on desk review of available relevant literature. Information was accessed through web search, journals, newspapers, magazines, books and reports. The causes of the conflict were divided into two – immediate and remote causes. The immediate causes identified included: destruction of crops by cattle, contamination of drinking water sources and sexual harassment of women by herders. Also, the status of farmer-cattle herder conflict was discussed. The current status is worrisome as herders are now carrying sophisticated weapons and farmers are threatening to follow suit for self defence. The effects of the conflict included: loss of lives and property, reduction in output of farmers and herdsmen and displacement of farmers and herders. The strategies to prevent the conflict were: creation of awareness of climate change, tree planting campaign and use of improved technology. Furthermore, strategies to manage the conflict included: setting up of peace-building committee, establishment of open communication channels and payment of compensation. The paper concludes that there is overwhelming need for involvement of all stakeholders and the desirability of coexisting together. This can go a long way in preventing/managing farmer- cattle herder conflict in Nigeria

Keywords: Farmer, herder, conflict, prevention, management, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture remains the mainstay of any economy especially the economies of developing countries like Nigeria. The two main branches of agriculture are crop production and animal husbandry. The two branches are dependent on one another both positively and negatively. This is because crops provide feeds to animals and animals supply animal excreta as manure for crop production in symbiotic relationship. On the other hand, animals can destroy both the crop and environment (land, water, air) if not effectively controlled. This is usually, the origin of conflict between farmers and cattle herders (Cee, Henning and Harvey, No date).

The scenario in Nigeria is such that cattle is mainly produced in the North (Fulani) while southern part of Nigeria is suitable for crop production with flourishing grassland/vegetation for cattle grazing. According to Ofuoku and Isife (2010), cattle rearing were mainly prevalent in the Guinea, Sudan and Sahel savannah belts where crop production was carried out only during the short rainy season on a small scale. This gave the cattle herders access to a vast area of grassland. As time went on, and with the introduction of irrigated farming in the savannah belt of Nigeria and the increased withering of pasture during the dry season, less pasture was available to cattle herders. The herdsmen had to move southward to the coastal zone where the rainy season is longer and the soil retains moisture for relatively long time. In Nigeria, conflict between farmers and cattle herders had been in existence several years ago and has been persistence and now in recent times a compounded contemporary issue.

According to Iro (1994), cattle herders begin southward movement from October to

December which is the end of rainy season and beginning of dry season. This season, coincides with the harvesting period in the south resulting to conflict with farmers. January to February is the harmattan season when cattle herders embark on long grazing hours. At this period they adopt coping measures like splitting their herds and more frequent visits to stable water sources. Again, pollution of water sources may give rise to conflicts between herders and members of host communities who are mainly farmers. March and April are usually the toughest periods for the herdsmen because they are the hottest period in the grazing calendar. At this point, farmers are starting crop production such as maize, yam, cassava etc. By May and June, crops begin to flourish and mature including other grasses which attract cattle leading to escalation of conflicts.

The end of southward movement of herders is not in sight as effects of climate change are compounding the situations in northern part of the country. The pressure of population in the southern parts of Nigeria resulting from internally displaced persons (IDPs) caused by insurgency and effects of climate change on the land such as erosion are exacerbating farmers survival in addition to predisposing them to unavoidable conflict with cattle herders.

For obvious reasons, the conflict between farmers and herders cannot be completely stopped. The livelihood of all stakeholders is entirely dependent on common factor of environment. A farmer depends on crop yield for survival while a herder perceives his herd as his life because life is worthless without his cattle. He assumes that farmer's encroachment on his grazing fields and routes is a call to war (IRIN, 2009).



As it is, the only option left is to search for a path of peace to prevent/manage increasing conflicts between farmers and herders which have led to destruction of life and property. Prevention is better than cure. There is need to understand the fact and necessity of coexisting in a community for mutual benefits. The need for constant negotiation and sharing cannot be over-emphasized.

Conflict situations have always existed in families, communities and state. However, certain conflicts are simple while others are complex defiling all possible strategies for resolution. In the past, conflicts have always existed between farmers and cattle herders in Nigeria. Some scholars state that conflicts resulting from cattle grazing have existed for as long as the practice of agriculture (Blench, 2010; Abbass, 2012).

However, what is worrisome is the current magnitude of the conflicts and the reverberating consequences on the nation especially her ailing economy. The herders now attack farming communities with sophisticated weapons leading to infrastructural facilities' destruction, raping and burning of houses and property. In certain cases, the entire communities are razed with fire and members rendered homeless. In Benue, Plateau and most recently Enugu State, communities were attacked and members slaughtered like animals.

The conflicts have actually been taken to the next level and currently threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria as well as her desire to diversify her economy via agriculture. Therefore, there is overwhelming need to seek ways and means of not only resolving the conflict but possibly search for appropriate strategies to prevent/manage such conflicts in future.

Therefore, the overall objective of the review was to examine farmer-cattle herder conflict and proffer strategies to mediate and/or mitigate it. Specifically, the study sought to: examine immediate and remote causes of the conflict; describe current status of the conflict; examine the effects of the conflict; and proffer strategies to mediate and/or mitigate future conflict.

Theoretical setting

Conflict is intrinsic in man (Human beings). According to Crossman (2016), Conflict theory states that tensions and conflicts arise when resources, status, and power are unevenly distributed between groups in society, and that these conflicts become the engine for social change. This view is collabourated by Tonah (2006) when he confirms that main stream conflict theory views constant antagonism over economic resources as the fundamental cause of conflict between economic agents. The economic agents in this context are farmers and cattle herders. The point of conflict is usually when crops of farmers are destroyed by cattle knowingly or unknowingly.

Ofuoku and Isife (2010) further report that clear demarcation exists between different types of conflict in farmer-herder relations. Again, Hagberg (1998) makes a distinction between the various types of conflicts in farmer-herder relations. He differentiates between disputes among individuals and groups, conflict of interest and violent conflict. Dispute refers to disagreement between two or more persons while violent conflict involves mayhem, destruction and killing of persons and livestock arising from a dispute (Tonal, 2006). On the other hand, a conflict of interest is an adoption of opposing views and concerns by different actors which usually takes the form of non-violent competition for control of resources in a given area (Ofuoku and Isife, 2010).

The increasing number of conflicts in various areas of human endeavour is worrisome. The trends such as environmental degradation, climate change, population growth, chronic poverty, globalization and increasing inequality risk future conflicts (Lund, 2016). These various types of conflict for control of resources are becoming more frequent and more pronounced in some areas as the demand for certain materials comes to exceed the available supply. For example, an acute shortage of arable land and fresh water seems to have been a significant factor in several conflicts, including those in Chiapas, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe (including Nigeria). The inevitability of these conflicts calls for prevention strategies through the instrumentality of conflict management and peace-building. The idea of preventing conflict is laudable and at the same time seems impracticable but surely it is possible.

According to Lund (2016), conflict prevention applies to peaceful situations where substantial physical violence is possible based on typical indicators of rising hostilities. Nevertheless, public controversies that get so rancorous that social groups stop communicating are usually unhealthy but much less grievous than states or groups about to kill each other with deadly weapon (Lund, 2016). He distinguished conflict prevention from other approaches to conflict mainly by when it comes into play during the conflict not how it is done. According to him, compared to the huge costs of war, the costs of preventing it are dramatically less. He argued that conflict prevention has been tried in places where the risk of conflict was present but they were averted such as South Africa, Macedonia, the Baltics, Crimea and the South China Sea.

Therefore, Conflict prevention focuses on prospective new or 'virgin' conflicts where a peaceful equilibrium has prevailed for some years but fundamental social and/or global forces are producing new controversies, tensions and disputes. However imperative, later interventions (for example: conflict management, peace-



building) are for minimizing loss of life. They are less humane and likely more difficult because the antagonists are organised, armed and deeply invested in destroying each other (Lund, 2016). For this paper, both conflict prevention and conflict management strategies were used to tackle the challenge of farmer-cattle herder conflict.

Immediate and remote causes of farmer-cattle herder conflict

The causes of conflicts between farmers and herders must be well established before any meaningful strategies for prevention/management may be proffered. In this study attempt was made to categorize the causes of the conflict into two-immediate and remote causes.

Immediate causes

The immediate causes are the ones that can trigger off conflict here and now. They include: destruction of crops by cattle, contamination of drinking water sources, and sexual harassment of women by herders, harassment of herders by youths, cattle rustling, indiscriminate bush burning and disregard to constituted authority.

Destruction of crops by cattle

It is a well known fact that destruction of farmers' crops by cattle will result to conflict. Such destruction of crops can be perpetrated by straying cattle or in the presence of herders and some times in the presence of herders and farmers. Researchers agree that the most frequent cause of conflict is destruction of crops (Tonah, 2006; Ofuoku and Isife, 2009). This kind of conflict is generally of immediate nature because the farmer feels that his or her livelihood is threatened. Recently, conflict of this nature has taken place in Enugu, Benue, Plateau, Oyo, Ekiti, Ondo to mention but a few.

Contamination of drinking water sources

It is generally known among farmers and herders that cattle need drinking water just like human beings. However, the bone of contention is usually when cattle destroy the source of drinking water by defecating on the area or when herders allow cattle to overgraze on areas at the source prohibited for entry by the host community. This can trigger off immediate conflict between farmers and herders. In some of the villages, sources of water for domestic purposes have either been destroyed or polluted which informs the reaction of the affected communities to the invasion of the herdsmen. Also, since the herdsmen see water as common resources to which they can lay claim; they insist on their right to use it resulting to conflict with its effects on sustainability of environment in terms of socio-political and economic development (Tenuche and Ifatimehin, 2009).

Sexual harassment of women by herders

It has become a common practice for herders to resort to raping of women and girls who go to do their farm work. Ofuoku and Isife, (2010) report that major source of conflict is rape or sexual harassment. The herders who are singles in a bid to satisfy their thirst for females fall into such temptation. For instance, Falino (2015) report that hundreds of people, mostly women, from Ahaba Imenyi in Isuikwuato local government trooped to Umuahia, the Abia State capital on Friday to protest the invasion of their farmlands by Fulani herdsmen, whom they accused of not only destroying crops but sexually harassing women who go to farms. A woman leader in the distressed community, Mrs. Victoria Ifeanyichukwu said that the community had been pushed to the wall as women had stopped going to the farms due to the incessant sexual harassments and attempted rape by the herdsmen.

Harassment of herders by youths

The youths in host communities are usually the vanguards of local authorities. They are the members of village/Gown Vigilante group. In the case of destruction of crops or sexual harassment, they are usually sent to go and invite the herders or sometimes they go on a reprisal mission. The herders after wilfully committing an offence prepare themselves for any eventuality which usually results to conflict. Angry youths of Aku community in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State have carried out a reprisal attack on Fulani herdsmen in the area. The villagers were angry over the destruction of their crops by cows and the continued harassment by the armed herdsmen (Staff-writer, 2016).

Cattle rustling/killing of cattle

The case of rustling/killing of cattle is mainly as a result of earlier misunderstanding or damage perpetrated in the host community. It is not a common occurrence for people to steal/kill herders' cattle for no just cause. For instance, crop damage may compel farmers to poison crops/grasses so that cattle which graze on them may die. This again is a call for conflict. As reported earlier in the case of harassment of herders by youth of Aku community in Enugu State, the herdsmen also accused the youths of slaughtering their seven cows and rustling of 100 cows (Staff-writer, 2016).

Indiscriminate bush burning

During the dry season, herders find it difficult to feed their cattle. And so, before the onset of rainy season, some of them set bushes on fire which sometimes escalate into the farm and destroy both harvested and un-harvested crops. Similar incident was reported in Delta State.



According to Ofuoku and Isife (2010), during the dry season, grasses and forages dry up and herdsmen believe that if the dried vegetation is burnt, fresh pasture would regenerate. In the process of burning, the fire spreads into adjoining farms destroying crops in farmers' farm.

Disregard to constituted authority

Rural communities in Nigeria have power-structure made up of traditional rulers, chiefs, village/town unions etc. These local authorities have rules and regulations as well as means of embarking on rural development projects to better their lives and assist the government in community development. Since community development is for everybody, if cattle herders fail to cooperate with the host community, it can lead to instant conflict. The youth vanguards may slug it out with cattle herders if they fail to cooperate with local authorities. Ofuoku and Isife (2010) report that herdsmen refuse to pay development levies imposed on crop and livestock/poultry farmers by traditional authorities in their host communities. This is usually taken as disregard and insult by the traditional authorities who always want to exert their authority. The youth as the local security outfit are sent to collect such levies when the herdsmen fail to pay. They always meet stiff resistance from the herdsmen when the youths try to exercise the power given to them.

Remote causes

The remote causes are hidden causes which may not be apparent in farmer-cattle herder relationship but yet a portent force that fuels the conflict. They include ethnic and religious inclination, poverty, effects of climate change and rapid population growth.

Ethnic and religious inclination

Ethnic rivalry is one of the factors indirectly fuelling farm-cattle herder conflict in Nigeria. According to Klare (2001), these conflicts often appear to be ethnic -- and indeed may have evolved into such -- but they risk misinterpretation if scholars ignore their origins in resource disputes. In Nigeria, there is always lack of objectivity in considering issues of resource conflicts even among security agents drafted to quench a rising conflict probably because ethnic and religious inclination. This scenario breeds a lot of ill feeling and exacerbates the conflict. The herders who belong to major ethnic group (Hausa-Fulani 29% of Nigerian population- Mikailu, 2016) are always bold and daring in issues of farmer-cattle herder conflict. Again, religion is another portent hidden force in escalation of farmer-cattle herder conflict. And so, where such conflict arises in communities dominated by Christians and the cattle herders are mostly Muslims, religious sentiments become the

order of the day. In the past, such clashes were confined to Nigeria's central region, with the mainly Christian Berom farming community in Plateau state engaging in tit-for-tat killings with Muslim nomadic herders (Mikailu, 2016).

Poverty

The worsening poverty in most African States including Nigeria may be responsible for escalating conflict in the region. In Nigeria, the people directly involved in farmer-cattle herder conflict are mostly rural poor farmers and cattle herders who may not be the real owners of the herds. The farmers see their crops as their last hope for survival while herders' wages are fully tied to proper feeding and protection of the herds. This situation makes conflict inevitable even though it may not be seen as direct cause of the conflict.

Effects of climate change

Currently, climate change is threatening the existence of vast areas of natural resources both of plant and animal origin. The effects of climate change is drying up the Chad basin and encouraging desertification in the North thus forcing herders to move southward in search of water and grasses for the herds. In the south the pressure of development and deforestation is compounding the effects of climate change and less and less land is left for farming and even lesser for grazing purposes. This situation ultimately leads to conflict between farmers and cattle herders. Mikailu (2016) confirms that the problem may get worse in coming years as climate change and desertification push migrant herders farther south. Dawn (No date) reports that pastoralism is being seriously affected by new environmental and social forces exemplified by climate change and government policy restricting movement and other practices. Changing climates have a significant influence on pastoralists who pursue environmentally dependent livelihoods. In harsh hot or cold landscapes the ability to obtain adequate fodder to fatten animals is the endemic challenge. Shifts in weather patterns, seasonality of precipitation and recharge of sub-surface water sources are vital to the viability of herding.

Rapid population growth

The world's human population is expected to grow by about three billion people between now and 2050 (rising from 6.2 billion people in 2002 to about 9.3 billion in 2050). Obviously, all of these additional humans will require food, shelter, clothing, energy, and other necessities (Klare, nd). According to the author, the highest levels of population growth are located in areas where the availability of some vital resources is in doubt. This is especially true for two critical materials: water and arable land. Severe scarcities of both have



already developed in parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America where population rates are especially high. This could lead to intense competition for access to these resources in the years ahead. In particular, it could provoke conflict over the distribution of shared water resources in such areas as the Nile and Jordan river basins, where water is already scarce and the combined population is expected to triple over the next 50 years.

In Nigeria, Aidi et al. (2016) note that Nigeria population at the moment according to World Bank is roughly 185million even though the last population census in Nigeria back in 2006 revealed about 140million. According to them, the frightening rate of expansion (in population size) as against the limited available resources makes economic growth difficult to achieve thus formulation of policies to address this problem became inevitable. However, Oramah (2006) focuses more on the impact of population growth on non-renewable resource consumption and depletion, land degradation and waste disposal, weather modification, rapid urbanisation and even desertification. Abbass (2005) asserts that as population grows, more land is being cultivated and less is available for pasture; forcing Fulani herdsmen in northern Nigeria to migrate and tramp on crops cultivated by farmers. For example, Nyong (2010) is of the opinion that with the expansion of population, the rate of food production would naturally increase and to meet that increasing demand, it is natural for the farmers to encroach into marginal lands that had been the traditional pasture routes for the cattle. This has therefore heightened struggle between livestock and agricultural production which, more often than not, result in the escalation of conflicts.

Current status of farmer-cattle herder conflict

As stated earlier, farmer-cattle herder conflict is not a new phenomenon. Abbass (nd) states that such conflicts have existed since the beginning of agriculture and increases and decreases in intensity and frequency depending on economic, environmental and other factors. Moritz (2010), also affirms that although West African herdsmen and farmers have long coexisted in symbiotic relationships that have persisted through both peaceful and contentious encounters, reports of violent clashes are becoming more frequent.

The current persistent farmer-cattle herder conflicts may be as a result of continued increase in the number of herds of cattle moving southward. This may be as a result of successful control of the menace posed by cattle deadly disease prevalent in the south (Trypanosomiasis) and widespread availability of veterinary drugs (Tonah, 2006). To compound the situation, there is massive relocation of southerners from the North to the south because

of the Boko Haram insurgency in the North. The internally displaced persons (IDPs) returnees now engage in farming as a means of livelihood survival thus reducing areas originally used by cattle herders. The IDPs introduce some crops that were not popularly grown in the south before like cucumber, water melon; certain species of garden egg etc and other farmers are adopting the crops and putting more pressure on the land.

Since cattle herdsmen must seek means of survival to continue to be in business, they are now carrying sophisticated weapons to protect their cattle and ensure they are well fed no matter the situation or the location (sometimes in farmers farm). The herdsmen have been co-existing with their host communities in the villages/towns for many decades with their shepherd sticks. The worst you could see them with were arrows, cutlasses and daggers. The current use of weapons of mass destruction by herdsmen is the result of frequent violent conflicts all over the country.

The farmer-cattle herder conflict is currently widespread in different states of Nigeria namely Adamawa, Plateau, Benue, Taraba, Enugu, Imo, Ekiti, Oyo, Osun and Ondo. The recent incidents in some parts of Enugu (Nimbo and Nkanu) are practical demonstration of use sophisticated weapons by cattle herdsmen on their host communities. These attacks on farmers with sophisticated weapons have led to threats of farmers that they are going to acquire such weapons for self defence since government security agents are unable to protect their lives and property. Therefore, the current conflict is gearing towards a war situation.

In addition to possession of sophisticated weapon by herdsmen is the current rate of rape, robbery and kidnapping associated with cattle herdsmen. The herdsmen rape both young girls and married women some times in the presence of their parents and husbands. Also, incessant robberies are carried out by herdsmen along major high ways in the country with well respected members of the communities including clergymen, technocrats and politicians being kidnapped for ransoms.

Effects of the conflict

The effects of farmer-cattle herder conflict are obvious but need to be highlighted. It is also important to highlight the fact that both parties are equally affected. For instance, in the recent violent conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Nimbo, Enugu State, the residents of the village say they have been forced off their land by herdsmen who kill or rape farmers they encounter. But local herdsmen say they are also under attack. One Fulani leader told VOA that motorcycle-riding hoodlums were robbing and killing herdsmen in the bush. Another said 16 herdsmen had been slain in

the southeast this year. For the purpose of this paper, the following effects were discussed:

Loss of lives and property

There is no doubt that a lot of farmers and herders have lost their lives and property to the continual conflict which presently has frequently become violent. According to Martin (2016), farms have been built on ancient routes of a semi-nomadic community in Nigeria, causing violence that has already claimed hundreds of lives this year. Locals in Agatu district in Nigeria's central Benue State say Fulani herdsman killed dozens of people during a string of attacks this spring. Many homes were set on fire and reduced to piles of bricks. Some of the villagers are still recovering from their injuries: one man was hobbling along on crutches as a result of a gunshot wound. The host communities sometimes confess that they retaliate the mayhem perpetrated by herdsman.

Reduction in output of farmers and herdsman

Farmer-cattle herder conflict is usually targeted on crops and cattle. Crops are destroyed when cattle are allowed to stray into the farmers' farm. The cattle graze on the crops as well as trample on some of them thereby reducing the yield, the quantity and quality of the crops. Consequently the output and the income are compromised. On the other hand, conflict can lead to killing of cattle, rustling, confiscation and starvation of cattle. During the period of the conflict, the cattle are starved which can lead to sickness, loss of weight and even death of the animal. Again, this can lead to reduction in output and consequent income. The long term effect of the conflict is food insecurity and poverty. The conflict can make some farmers in some rural communities not to go to farm located far from their communities for fear of being attacked or raped.

Displacement of farmers and herdsman

When farmer-cattle herder conflict escalates to a violent situation, houses/camps are razed by fire. This automatically renders the occupants of these houses/camps homeless. The farmers seek for temporary accommodation from neighbours, friends and relations while herdsman may relocate to another location. In Nigeria, the number of IDPs is increasing because of this kind of violent conflict. Displacement of farmers and herdsman affects them economically, socially and psychologically. The cost of building or rebuilding a new house in Nigeria is presently beyond the reach of even an average income earner.

Reduction in social and religious and educational activities

In conflict situation, the peace and tranquillity of the location is threatened. The air of fear stifles any kind of social gathering and some times occasions already fixed are postponed. This can heighten stress situation and may even lead to death. The fear of attack in the church or mosque

may compel individuals or groups not to attend worship or other religious activities. In the same vein, pupils/students may be forced not to go to school for fear of being attacked on the way or in the school. Some times children may be withdrawn from schools on hearing a rumour for the conflict or when the source of livelihoods is destroyed by the conflict.

Strategies to mediate and/or mitigate farmer-cattle herder conflict

The motivation to seek strategies to prevent/manage conflict lies on the fact the costs of conflicts are much more than the costs of preventing it. The efforts in preventing/managing conflict lie on thorough understanding of causes of the conflict. In this paper, preventive and management strategies were discussed.

Strategies to mitigate farmer-cattle herder conflict

Mitigation strategies may be numerous but the few discussed in this paper include:

Creation of awareness of climate change

That the land resources are threatened by the effects of climate change is no longer in doubt. According to Adebisi-Adelani and Oyesola (2014), climate change has become a major challenge to agricultural development in Africa and the world at large. It threatens agriculture production through rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns or the increase of drought. They emphasize that farmers have to live with the realities of climate change to be able to manage the situation and to maintain their enterprise. And so, there is need to create awareness on climate change to both farmers and cattle herders and teach them the dangers of climate change as well as how they are affected by the scourge. A farmer burning his land after clearing and cattle herders burning the bush for fresh grasses to re-grow are doing themselves more harm because they are aggravating the cause of climate change. For instance, when fertility of the soil is reduced by climate change, farmers tend to increase their hectares to leverage up and this in turn reduces the area used by herdsman to feed their cattle.

Tree planting campaign

Tree planting campaign should be intensified in different parts of Nigeria to wage increasing desertification and deforestation ravaging the country. Both farmers and herdsman should be enlightened on how they are affected in the process. The desertification is adversely affecting water resources which are vital for both of them. Again, deforestation exacerbates the cause of climate change. And so, addressing these challenges in timely fashion may prevent farmer-cattle herder conflict in future.

Use of improved technology

The use of improved technology will help farmers and herdsman increase their yield without



necessarily increasing their hectareage. Agricultural extension workers must be empowered to update farmers and herdsmen on the best practices to remain in business. For instance, herdsmen should be trained on how to prepare and use supplementary feeds to augment cattle grazing. This will reduce the distance they cover in grazing their animals.

Creation of awareness on control of population

The world's human population is expected to grow by about three billion people between now and 2050 (rising from 6.2 billion people in 2002 to about 9.3 billion in 2050). Obviously, all of these additional humans will require food, shelter, clothing, energy, and other necessities (Klare, nd). Although, the control of population can not be done in a day, awareness of the possible links between increase in population and availability of land for farmers and herders should be explained to the stakeholders. Both government and non governmental organisations must intensify their efforts in encouraging the stakeholders to control their birth rate.

Symbiotic farm project

The need for farmers and cattle herders to coexist cannot be overemphasized. The fact remains that both farmers and cattle herders can benefit from one another. Oyama (2014) reports that Hausa farmers and Fulbe herders have established a contract; governing livestock grazing. The herders seek to establish contract with the farmers to camp on their farm land for a few weeks to several months. In the process, the cattle provide excreta while farmers provide substantial meals and pay bonuses after the end of the contract (Shinjo, et.al, 2008). This kind of symbiotic project can also be established in the southern part of Nigeria as one of the means of preventing future conflicts.

Strategies to mediate farmer-cattle herder conflict

The strategies to mediate conflict aim at dousing the already tensed atmosphere in a conflict situation. Some of the management strategies discussed in this paper include:

Establishment of peace-building Committee

In order to promptly address possible conflict between farmers and cattle herders, peace-building committee should be established in host communities and members made up of all stakeholders. The committee should also agree on fixed date for meetings to discuss issues that may later lead to conflicts. Members of the committee should be made up of men or women of integrity. The committee should be able to prepare rules and regulations guiding their corporate existence.

Establishment of open communication channels

In most of the recent conflicts between farmers and cattle herders in Nigeria, the issue of unresolved differences have become a recurring decimal. There is overwhelming need to establish open communication channels for all stakeholders

to report issues that are hurting them. The peace-building committee should be one of them. There should be hotline established to take care of certain issues that require urgent attention.

Inter-religious dialogue

There is no doubt that one of issues escalating farmer-cattle herder conflict is religion. The peace-building committee from time to time should create forum for religious dialogue. Although this is done at national level, it should be replicated at rural community levels.

Payment of compensation

The peace-building committee must ensure that adequate compensation is paid to the person whose crop or animal is wilfully destroyed. The guidelines for offences and appropriate compensation must be determined before the offence is committed. Oyama (2014) stresses that the rate compensation must be reviewed in meetings of Hausa and Fulbe chiefs and the elder Hausa village headmen every June before farmers sow seed. This should be tried in all the host communities where the herdsmen are located.

Establishment of grazing land policy

It is generally being suggested that one way to ensure sustainable peace and development among herdsmen and farmers in rural communities of Nigeria is to have a designated area set apart by law for grazing of cattle. Already, a bill for an act to establish grazing reserve in each of the states of the federation of Nigeria to improve agriculture yield from livestock farming and curb incessant conflicts between cattle farmers and crop farmers in Nigeria has been enacted by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Hon. Sadiq (2016) sponsored a bill titled "NATIONAL GRAZING RESERVE (ESTABLISHMENT) BILL 2016". The bill when signed by the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria becomes the law guiding grazing of cattle in the country.

It is expected that the states and local government areas will comply with provisions of the bill for lasting solution of incessant conflicts between farmers and herdsmen. However, there seems to be strong opposition to the bill especially in the Middle Belt and southern part of Nigeria. For instance, Ekiti State government had already passed a law titled "prohibition of cattle and other ruminants grazing in Ekiti 2016" which criminalizes grazing in some places within the state and outside certain period in the day. The truth remains that animal ranching as against grazing of animals in free range as it is presently practised will go a long way in mitigating farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria. This is currently the global best practice in animal production.

CONCLUSION

The paper established recurrent clashes between the farmers and cattle herders. The causes



of the conflict were divided into two – immediate and remote causes. The immediate causes identified included: destruction of crops by cattle, contamination of drinking water sources and sexual harassment of women by herders. The remote causes were ethnic and religious inclination, poverty, effects of climate change and rapid population growth. Also, the status of farmer-cattle herder conflict was discussed. The current status is worrisome as herders are now carrying sophisticated weapons and farmers are threatening to follow suit for self defence. The effects of the conflict included: loss of lives and property, reduction in output of farmers and herdsmen and displacement of farmers and herders. The strategies to mitigate the conflict were creation of awareness of climate change, tree planting campaign and use of improved technology. Furthermore, strategies to mediate the conflict included: setting up of peace-building committee, establishment of open communication channels, payment of compensation and establishment of grazing land policy. Finally, there is overwhelming need for involvement of all stakeholders and the desirability of coexisting together. This can go a long way in mitigating farmer- cattle herder conflict in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Abbass, I. M. (2005). No retreat no surrender conflict for survival between Fulani pastoralists and farmers in Northern Nigeria. *European Scientific journal*, January Edition, vol.8, No.1
- Adebisi-Adelani, O. and Oyesola, O. B. (2014). Information sources and awareness of climate change by citrus farmers in Benue State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, Vol.18 (2) December, Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON), pp.1-11
- Aidi, H. O., Emecheta C. and Ngwudiobu I. M. (2016). Population and Economic Growth in Nigeria: is there an Empirical Evidence of Causality? *International Journal Advances in Social Science and Humanities* Available online at: www.ijassh.com RESEARCH ARTICLE
- Cee de Haan, Harvey Blackburn (No date). Livestock and environment: Finding a balance. FAO Corporate Document Repository, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department. www.fao.org/docrep/x5303e00.htm#contents
- Crossman, A. (2016). Understanding conflict theory: A brief overview. URL <https://www.thoughtco.com/conflict-theory-3026622>
- Dawn C. T. (No date). Climate effects on nomadic pastoralist societies, *Forced Migration Review*. Downloaded at URL <http://www.fmreview.org/climatechange-disasters/chatty-sternberg.html> on 15th April 2017
- Falino B. (2015). Nigeria: Farm invasion, sexual harassment by Fulani herdsmen. URL <http://falinoworld.blogspot.com.ng/2015/02/nigeria-farm-invasion-sexual-harassment.html>
- Hagberg, S. (1998). Between peace and justice dispute settlement between Karaboro agriculturalists and Fulbe agro pastoralists in Burkina Faso. Uppsala: Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology, 25
- Hon. Sadiq (2016). National Grazing Reserve (establishment) Bill 2016. Available online at: URL <http://www.placng.org/new/upload/HB448.pdf>
- IRIN (2009). Nigeria: curbing farmer-nomadic clashes and protecting livestock routes. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/news/v.phd>
- Iro IS (1994). The Fulani herding system, Washington, African development foundation. Pp. 6 -12
- Klare T. M. (nd). Resource conflict. Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass. USA. URL <https://www.hampshire.edu/pawss/resource-conflict>
- Klare T. M. (2001). Resource wars: the new landscape of global conflict. Reviewed by Richard N. Cooper. *Capsule Review* May/June
- Lund, M. S. (2016). Conflict prevention: theory in pursuit of policy and practice, *Conflict Prevention- Theory in Pursuit of Policy and Practice.pdf*- Adobe Reader. The Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution, 15:287-321
- Martin Patience (2016). Nigeria's deadly battle for land: Herdsmen versus farmers British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News, Benue state, Nigeria 10th August, From the section [Africa](#)
- Mikailu, N. (2016). Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News, 5th May
- Ofuoku, A. U. and Isife, B. I. (2010). Causes, effects and resolution of farmers-nomadic cattle herders conflict in delta state, Nigeria, *Agricultura Tropica et Subtropica*, Vol. 43 (1), pp.31-41
- Oramah, I. T. (2006). The effects of population growth in Nigeria, *Journal of Applied Science*, 6:1332-1337



- Oyama, Shuichi (2014). Farmer-herder conflict, land rehabilitation and conflict prevention in the Sahel region of West Africa. *African Study Monographs, Suppl.50*:103-122
- Tenuche M. S. and Ifatimehin O. O. (2009). Resource conflict among farmers and Fulani herdsmen: implications for resource sustainability, *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations Vol. 3 (9)*, pp. 360-364, September, Available online at <http://www.academicjournals.org/ajpsir>
- Tonah, S. (2006). Managing farmer-herder conflicts in Ghana's Volta Basin. *Ibadan Journal of Social Sciences 4(1)*:35-45
- Shinjo, H., Hayashi, K., Abdoulaye, T. and Kosaki, T. (2008). Management of livestock excreta through corralling practice by sedentary pastoralists in the Sahelian region of West Africa: A case study of south-western Niger. *Tropical Agriculture Development, 52 (4)*: 97-103
- Staff-writer (2016). Angry youth attack Fulani herdsmen in Enugu <https://ynaija.com/angry-youths-conduct-reprisal-attack-fulani-herdsmen-enugu/>