

**PREVAILING FACTORS INDUCING PASTORALISTS-FARMERS CONFLICTS AMONGST
COMMUNITIES IN AWKA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE, SOUTH-
EAST, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the prevailing factors inducing pastoralist–farmer conflicts among communities in Awka North Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East Nigeria. The objectives of the study examined the nature of herder–farmer conflicts, their causes, consequences, and possible solutions for mitigating such conflicts. Four theories were reviewed, namely: conflict theory, structural functionalism theory, symbolic interactionism theory, and social disorganisation theory. However, conflict theory and structural functionalism theory were adopted as the theoretical framework. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design for data collection and analysis. A sample size of 204 respondents was used. Quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, simple percentages, and charts. Qualitative data were analysed thematically using NVivo software (version 2.0). Two hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (χ^2) test statistic. The findings revealed that major causes of herder–farmer conflicts include land encroachment, destruction of crops by cattle, killing of cattle, reprisal attacks, inadequate grazing reserves, and blockage of grazing routes. The major consequences identified include destruction of farmlands, loss of lives and property, displacement of farmers, food insecurity, and reduced investment in affected communities. The study recommends, among other measures, proactive strategies such as awareness campaigns to promote peaceful coexistence between herders and farmers in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Conflict, farmers, food production, herders, pastoralists.

Introduction:

The incessant conflict between herders and farmers in Nigeria has become one of the most pressing security challenges facing the nation. Rooted in ethno-cultural and socio-economic tensions, this conflict manifests most frequently in rural communities where agriculture seems to be the mainstay and the means of livelihood for the people. It involves nomadic or semi-nomadic Fulani herders, who migrate seasonally with their cattle, and sedentary farmers whose major occupation is crop production. In other words, conflict between nomadic herders and settled farmers is a longstanding global phenomenon that stems from a competition for limited natural resources. Zartman (2005) posits that “access to resources, beliefs, values, or the nature of the relationship is factors that cause conflict,” a view echoed across various contexts. Signer (1996) In Nigeria, this conflict has become increasingly contentious, especially in states experiencing dwindling arable land and intensifying demographic pressures. Okollo (2014) argued that in many parts of Nigeria, including the South-East, these confrontations have intensified, leading to loss of lives, destruction of farmlands, displacement of persons, and widespread insecurity.

Ngene and Okafor (2022) found that communal clashes in Awka North significantly impact agricultural output. Their regression-based analysis indicated a negative relationship between communal conflict (boundary disputes, crop damage, and land encroachment) and food production. The study underscores that insecurity in these agrarian zones not only threatens household income but also undermines broader food security policies. Nwankwo (2022) identifies land encroachment, crop destruction by cattle, bush burning, and mutual distrust as key drivers of the conflict in Anambra State. Her findings reveal that communities have responded by forming vigilante groups and diversifying incomes, but these coping strategies have not fundamentally addressed the main causes of the crisis. The herder-farmer conflict has also disrupted education in affected communities. Hamma (2024) found that in Bauchi State, violent clashes led to the destruction of school infrastructure and a significant drop in student enrollment. Adebayo and Okeke (2021) similarly observed that children from displaced farming families are especially vulnerable, with many forced to abandon their education due to insecurity and economic hardship. These educational setbacks not only affect individual futures but also undermine long-term community development and resilience.

The economic toll of the conflict is substantial, affecting not only agricultural productivity but also broader development indicators. Bisong (2025) estimates that, Nigeria loses over USD 14 billion annually due to herder-farmer clashes, with significant losses in food production and rural livelihoods. Wamdeo, Ntagu, Shehu, and Ajuonuma (2024) corroborate this, noting that resource scarcity, climate change, and weak governance have created a volatile environment for both farmers and herders. In Awka North, these economic disruptions threaten the viability of farming as a livelihood and undermine efforts toward rural development and poverty reduction. Peace building initiatives in Nigeria have often failed to address the root causes of the herder-farmer conflict. Ademola-Oyelana (2025) found that state level interventions, such as anti-open grazing laws and security deployments, have had limited success due to poor implementation and lack of grassroots engagement. It is against this background that this study tends to examine the prevailing factors inducing pastoralists-farmers conflicts amongst communities in Awka north local government area, Anambra state, south-east, Nigeria.

Study Objectives:

1. Determine the prevailing nature of herders-farmers conflict in communities in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State.
2. Identify the major causes of the herders-farmers conflict in communities in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State.

Conceptual Clarification/Review of Relevant Literature:

Prevailing Nature of Herders-Farmers Conflicts in Nigeria

The herder-farmer conflict in Awka North Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State has emerged as a persistent and deeply rooted challenge affecting rural livelihoods, agricultural productivity, and communal peace. Over the past decade, this conflict has intensified due to a combination of environmental, socio-economic, and political factors.

In Awka North, the arrival of herders has strained existing land-use arrangements and challenged local norms of coexistence. The conflict theory offers insight into these tensions, emphasizing how structural inequalities and competition over scarce resources can lead to social unrest. The absence of formal grazing routes and the failure of government to enforce land-use policies have further exacerbated the situation, leaving communities vulnerable to recurring violence.

The conflict in Awka North is also shaped by identity politics and the erosion of trust between ethnic groups. In Awka North, this perception has fuelled anti herder sentiment and undermined efforts at peaceful resolution. The proliferation of small arms and the rise of community defense groups have further militarized the conflict, making it more difficult to contain. Theoretical propositions from social identity theory suggest that when group boundaries are rigid and intergroup contact is limited; stereotypes and prejudice flourish, leading to conflict escalation. This dynamic is evident in Awka North, where mutual suspicion and fear have replaced the once symbiotic relationship between farmers and herders.

In Awka North, the lack of formal grazing infrastructure and the absence of policy enforcement have created a chaotic environment where herders and farmers operate in close proximity without clear boundaries or rules of engagement. This has led to frequent clashes, destruction of crops, and loss of lives.

The prevailing nature of herder-farmer conflict in Awka North LGA is multifaceted, involving environmental, socio-economic, and political dimensions. The conflict has escalated due to inadequate policy responses, climate induced migration, and the breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes the establishment of grazing reserves, enforcement of open grazing bans, and the promotion of dialogue between farmers and herders. Without such measures, the conflict will continue to threaten agricultural productivity, food security, and community cohesion in Awka North and beyond. As George (2022) assert, the future of rural development in Nigeria depends on the ability of stakeholders to resolve these conflicts through inclusive and sustainable strategies.

Oli, Ibekwe, and Nwankwo (2020) examined the Prevalence of Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria, focusing on the sociological dimensions of livelihood competition and resource scarcity. The study was conducted using secondary data sources, including journals, newspapers, and organizational publications. Although no direct sampling was involved, the authors synthesized data from multiple regions across Nigeria to provide a national prospect. The study revealed that limited access to grazing fields, destruction of crops, and scarcity of fresh water was recurring causes of conflict. The findings highlighted the loss of human and animal lives, displacement of communities, and breakdown of peaceful coexistence between ethnic groups. The authors concluded that the conflict had evolved from isolated disputes into a widespread socio-political crisis, threatening food security and national cohesion.

The herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria is a deeply rooted and increasingly violent struggle between nomadic pastoralists, primarily Fulani herders, and sedentary crop farmers. This conflict is driven by competition over access to land, water, and other agricultural resources, and has escalated in recent years due to environmental degradation, population growth, and weak governance structures. Ohadiugha and Gado (2025) argue that the conflict is one of the most destabilizing issues in Nigeria, leading to widespread displacement, destruction of livelihoods, and loss of lives. They emphasize that climate change has intensified land scarcity, forcing herders to migrate southward into farming communities, where their cattle often destroy crops, triggering violent reprisals. The conflict also has significant implications for food security and economic development. Nnaji, Ma, Ratna, and Renwick (2022) conducted an empirical study involving rural households and found that both the frequency and severity of herders-farmers clashes significantly increase food insecurity. Their findings reveal that affected communities experience reduced dietary diversity and limited access to food, especially during peak conflict periods. The destruction of crops, displacement of farming families, and disruption of local markets all contribute to a decline in agricultural productivity. This not only affects the immediate victims but also has ripple effects on national food supply and economic stability.

Efforts to address the herders-farmers conflict must therefore be multifaceted and inclusive. Ohadiugha and Gado (2025) advocate for collaborative policy frameworks that involve federal, state, and local governments, as well as civil society and traditional institutions. They emphasize the need for policies that recognize the rights and needs of both herders and farmers, promote sustainable land use, and foster community engagement. Vande and Aka-Ajani (2023) similarly call for a shift from reactive, militarized responses to proactive, dialogue based approaches. They argue that only through mutual understanding and equitable resource distribution can lasting peace be achieved.

Major Causes of Herders-Farmers Conflict in Nigeria

A study was conducted by Ademola-Oyelana (2023), titled *Herders-Farmers Conflict, State Government's Intervention and Conflict Management in Nigeria*, conducted in Ogbese Community, Akure North Local Government Area of Ondo State. The study population comprised residents of the community, with a sample size of 100 respondents selected through convenience and voluntary response sampling techniques. A four-point Likert-type questionnaire was used to collect data, which was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). The findings identified scarcity of natural resources particularly grazing land and water as a major internal factor contributing to the conflict. Additionally, the destruction of crops and farmland by herders during grazing activities was highlighted as a significant trigger.

Baderinwa (2019) conducted a comprehensive literature review titled *Farmers-Herders Conflict in Nigeria: A Review of Relevant Literature*, which synthesized findings from various empirical studies across the country. Although not based on primary data collection, the review analyzed multiple scholarly works to identify recurring causal themes. The study emphasized the destruction of crops by herders' cattle as the most frequently cited cause of conflict. Other contributing factors included cattle rustling, ethnic and religious differences, and competition over land ownership. The review also noted that historical grievances and the failure of the state to provide adequate conflict resolution mechanisms have exacerbated tensions. The author argued that the conflict is not merely a product of resource competition but is deeply embedded in Nigeria's socio-political fabric.

Nnaji et al. (2022) provided a quantitative assessment of the impact of farmer-herder conflicts on food insecurity in rural Nigeria in their study titled *Farmer-Herder Conflicts and Food Insecurity: Evidence from Rural Nigeria*. Conducted across multiple rural communities, the study surveyed 401 households using stratified random sampling. Although the primary focus was on food insecurity, the study identified major causes of conflict including unequal land distribution, ineffective land reform policies, and climate-induced migration. The findings revealed that both the incidence and severity of conflicts were significantly associated with increased food insecurity, suggesting that the root causes of conflict are deeply tied to structural inequalities and environmental stressors.

According to Nwankwo (2022), the most prevalent causes in Awka North include land encroachment, destruction of crops by cattle, and the absence of designated grazing reserves. These factors have disrupted agricultural livelihoods and strained intergroup relations. The herder-farmer conflict in Awka North Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State is a deeply rooted socio environmental crisis that reflects broader tensions in Nigeria's rural landscape. This conflict, which has intensified in recent years, is not merely a contest over land and resources but a manifestation of structural inequalities, ecological pressures, and identity politics. Scholars have increasingly emphasized that the causes of this conflict are multifaceted, involving both immediate triggers and long term systemic failures.

Environmental degradation and climate change have also played a critical role in fueling the conflict. Desertification and reduced pasture availability in northern Nigeria have forced herders to migrate southward in search of greener lands. This ecological displacement has placed pressure on southern communities like Awka North, where land is already scarce and agricultural activities are intensive. The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) (2021) notes that transhumance, under aged herding, and encroachment on grazing routes is major triggers of conflict. In Awka North, the lack of policy enforcement and the failure to establish ranches have left communities vulnerable to recurring clashes. Mbih (2020) supports this view, emphasizing that climate-induced migration has intensified competition over land and water resources, leading to violent confrontations between farmers and herders.

Another critical factor is the proliferation of small arms and the militarization of rural spaces. The presence of armed herders and the rise of community defense groups have transformed the conflict from a resource-based dispute into a security crisis. The CDD (2021) highlights that the use of hard substances among youth, the availability of weapons, and the involvement of criminal elements have further complicated the conflict dynamics. In Awka North, the fear of violence has led to the abandonment of farmlands, disruption of local markets, and displacement of entire communities. Mbih (2020) supports this view, noting that the militarization of the conflict has made it more difficult to contain and resolve, especially in areas where state presence is weak or compromised. Ugochukwu (2021) argued that, the major causes of herder-farmer conflict in Awka North LGA are deeply rooted in environmental stress, socio-economic inequality, ethnic polarization, and institutional failure. The conflict has escalated due to land encroachment, climate-induced migration, breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and identity politics. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes the establishment of grazing reserves, enforcement of open grazing bans, and the promotion of dialogue between farmers and herders. Without such measures, the conflict will continue to threaten agricultural productivity, food security, and community cohesion in Awka North and beyond.

Theoretical Orientation:

The study adopted two theories which are Conflict Theory and Structural Functionalism Theory. The Conflict Theory developed by Karl Marx theory is adopted because it provides a deeper understanding of the socio-economic tensions and structural inequalities that underpin the herders-farmers conflict in Anambra State, particularly in Urum, Amanuke and Ugbenu. Conflict Theory offers a compelling framework for analyzing how competition over scarce resources such as land, water, and economic opportunities leads to social friction, displacement, and economic disruption. Characterized by power struggles, class divisions, and systemic marginalization, Conflict Theory captures the persistent and often violent contestation between herders and farmers. In the context of Anambra State, Awka North precisely where agricultural land is increasingly pressured by population growth, urban expansion, and environmental degradation, the theory sheds light on how unequal access to resources and political representation exacerbates hostilities. It also helps explain how socio-economic instability emerges when one group perceives itself as economically or socially disadvantaged in relation to another. Additionally, Conflict Theory was adopted because it describes a society where dominant groups seek to maintain control over resources, while subordinate groups resist marginalization. Farmers often view herders as encroaching on their farmlands, while herders perceive themselves as excluded from land ownership and policy protection. This mutual suspicion and lack of institutional mediation intensify the conflict, leading to loss of livelihoods, destruction of property, and disruption of local economies. The conflict not only threatens food security and economic productivity but also weakens social cohesion and trust among ethnic and occupational groups. The socio-economic landscape of Anambra thus mirrors the core assumptions of Conflict Theory a society fractured by inequality, struggling to reconcile competing interests in the absence of equitable structures.

The Structural Functionalism Theory by Emile Durkheim is adopted because it provides a useful framework for understanding how social institutions function to maintain order and stability, and what happens when those institutions break down. In the context of Anambra State, particularly Awka North, the herders-farmers conflict disrupts key social structures such as agriculture, local governance, and community cooperation. Structural Functionalism helps explain how these disruptions affect the socio-economic wellbeing of rural communities leading to loss of livelihoods, displacement, and weakened social cohesion. The theory also highlights how the absence of effective conflict resolution systems and land management policies contributes to instability. As farming and herding are both vital to the local economy, their breakdown creates ripple effects across education, trade, and food security. It allows for a deeper understanding of how the conflict affects not just individuals, but the broader social system.

Study Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between the prevalence of herders/farmers conflict and reduced agricultural productivity in Awka North LGA, Anambra State.

Study Design, Materials and Methods:

This study adopted the mixed methods research design. It is a research design that is useful in carrying out a study using the questionnaire and In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guides. This helps a researcher to generalize findings to life situations, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the study.

The study was limited in scope to investigating the socio-economic impacts of herders-farmers conflict in Anambra State, with a focus on Awka North Local Government Area. It also examined the prevailing nature of herders-farmers conflict, major causes of herders-farmers conflict, socio-economic effects of herders-farmers conflict on farming households and various ways through which herders-farmers conflict could be mitigated in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State. The study participants were people aged 18 years and above living in Awka North Local Government Area as at the time of this study. Two hundred and four (204) adults aged 18 years and above were used as the sample size. This was statistically estimated and generated using the Taro Yamane's statistical formula as follows:

The formula is given as thus, $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

The quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used. The questionnaire schedule and in-depth interview (IDI) guide were the major instruments for data collection used in this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A consists of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section B deals with substantive issues of the research in line with specific study objectives. The questionnaire items were arranged thematically in line with the research objectives and were closed-ended to collect data relevant for the statistical tool used. To complement the quantitative data from the questionnaire, the IDI guide was used in line with the specific research objectives.

The quantitative data collected from the field were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Data were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, simple percentages, graphical illustrations such as pie charts and bar charts for easy understanding and clarity. Hypotheses formulated were tested using Chi-square (X^2) inferential statistics. This helped to determine and brought out clearly the relationships between the study variables.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<i>Socio-demographic variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Gender		
Male	93	49.5
Female	95	50.5
Total	188	100.0
Age Category		
18 – 27	130	69.1
28 – 37	40	21.2
38 – 47	13	6.9
48 and above	5	2.7
Total	188	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	165	87.8
Married	20	10.6
Separated	3	1.6
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	-	-
Total	188	100.0
Level of Education		
No formal education	12	6.4
FSLC	31	16.5
SSCE	87	46.3
OND/NCE	22	11.7
HND/B.Sc.	34	18.1
M.Sc.	2	1.1
Total	188	100.0
Religious Affiliation		

Christian	177	94.1
Muslim	6	3.2
African Traditional Religion	5	2.7
Atheist	-	-
Total	188	100.0
Occupation		
Farmer	86	45.7
Herder	5	2.7
Artisan	20	10.6
Trader	38	20.2
Civil servant	21	11.2
Unemployed	18	9.6
Total	188	100.0
Income Status		
Low income earner	111	59.0
Average income earner	62	33.0
High income earner	15	8.0
Total	188	100.0
Length of Stay in Awka North LGA		
Less than 5 years	25	13.3
5–10 years	98	52.1
11 years and above	65	34.6
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents are males while the minority are females. In terms of age category, table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 18–27 while the minority are 48 years and above. In terms of marital status, majority of the respondents indicated that they are single while a few others are separated. The table also shows that majority of the respondents have senior secondary school certificates and the minority have M.Sc. degrees. On religious affiliation, table 1 shows that majority of the respondents are Christians while the minority are African Traditional Worshippers. A further look at table 1 reveals the occupation of the respondents which indicates that majority of them are farmers while the minority are herders. Table 1 also shows that majority of the respondents are low income earners while the minority are high income earners. Similarly, another majority of the respondents have been living in Awka North LGA for an upward of 5–10 years while the minority of them have been living in Awka for less than 5 years. This implies that majority of the respondents have been residents of Awka North LGA for some years now and therefore, presumed to be more knowledgeable and familiar with the topic under investigation.

Table 2: Respondents' Views on the Prevailing Nature of the Herders-Farmers Conflict across Communities in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Frequent night clashes between farmers and herders in Awka North	65	34.6
Southward movement of herders driven by weather conditions in the north	19	10.1
Day time clashes between farmers and herders searching for greener pastures to feed their cows	33	17.6
Seasonal and mid-night burning of residential houses in Awka North	30	16.0
All of the above	41	21.8
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents indicated that frequent night clashes between farmers and herders is the prevailing nature of the herders-farmers conflict across communities in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State

while the minority disagreed. This implies that the respondents are familiar with the prevailing trend in herders-farmers conflict in Awka North LGA. This supports the IDI data. One of the interviewees stated:

First of all, herders-farmers conflict means a fight or disagreement between people who rear cattle (herders) and people who grow crops. In Awka North LGA of Anambra State, the herders-farmers conflict has become a serious issue affecting community peace and development. The conflict mostly occurs between local farmers and Fulani herders who move their cattle through farmlands in search of grass and water (Married, Male, 44 years, Farmer, Amanuke, Awka North LGA).

Another participant stated:

The prevailing nature of the conflict in Awka North LGA is mainly caused by competition for land and water resources. As the population in the area grows, farmlands and grazing areas have become smaller. Many herders no longer find enough open land for grazing, so they move into farmland areas. This makes farmers angry because their crops, which they worked hard to grow, are damaged or eaten by the cattle (Married, Female, 31 years, Farmer, Umuelom, Awka North LGA).

Another participant posited:

Another issue is the lack of clear rules and communication between herders and farmers. In many communities in Awka North, there are no agreed boundaries or local arrangements for grazing. When herders enter farmlands without permission, it leads to misunderstanding and fighting. Sometimes, like in Amanuke community leaders try to settle the disputes, but in many cases, the situation turns violent (Single, Male, 27 years, Herder, Amanuke, Awka North LGA).

Another interviewee revealed:

The herders-farmers conflict in Awka North LGA manifests in various ways leading to widespread insecurity in the area. The conflict has affected farming activities and food production in Umuelom. Many farmers are afraid to go to their farms because of the fear of attacks. This has reduced the amount of food items in the local markets. It also discourages young people from going into farming (Married, Female, 35 years, Farmer, Umuelom, Awka North LGA).

Table 3: Respondents' Views on the Prevalence of Herders-Farmers Conflict in Awka North LGA

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
High	102	54.3
Moderate	32	17.0
Low	54	28.7
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents indicated that there is high prevalence of herders-farmers conflict in Awka North. This implies that the possibility that herders-farmers conflict will occur or is occurring in Awka North LGA is on the high side.

Table 4: Respondents' Views on the Occurrence of Herders-Farmers Conflict in Awka North LGA

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Once in a week	46	24.5
Once in a month	89	47.3
Once in six months	23	12.2
Once in a year	28	14.9
Never	2	1.1
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents said that herders-farmers conflict in Awka North LGA occurs at least once in every month whereas the minority argued that it has never occurred. This shows that rumour of reprisal attacks and herders-farmers conflict appears to be a monthly occurrence in Awka North LGA.

Table 5: Respondents' Views on whether they Aware of the Existence of Herders-Farmers Conflict in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	105	55.9
No	83	44.1

Total	188	100.0
Field Survey, 2025		
Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents were aware of the existence of herders-farmers conflict in Awka North L.G.A. On the contrary, the minority of the respondents were not aware. This implies that many residents of Awka North LGA are conversant with the frequent clash between herders and farmers in the area.		
Table 6: Respondents' Views on the Major Causes of Herders-Farmers Conflict in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State		
<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Land encroachment	26	13.8
Destruction of crops by cattle	30	16.0
Killing of cattle and reprisal attacks	21	11.2
Inadequate grazing reserves	10	5.3
Blockage of grazing routes	15	8.0
All of the above	69	36.7
Don't really know	17	9.0
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 6 shows that majority of the respondents indicated all of the above as the major causes of herders-farmers conflict in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State while the minority of the respondents identified inadequate grazing reserves as minor cause. This implies that all the answers presented in table 6 are relevant and peculiar to Awka North LGA. This aligns with the qualitative data. One of the interviewees stated:

Farmers-herders conflict is a periodic clash between Fulani herdsmen and farmers over land, grazing rights, routes, climate change and water supply to their cattle. This clash or conflict has been there for years and has claimed many lives in many parts of Awka North LGA such as Urum, Amanuke and others (Single, Male, 27 years, Herder, Amanuke, Awka North LGA).

Another participant said:

In my view, I will say it is lack of understanding between herdsmen and farmers that influences this conflict. Sadly, when there is low output from the farm because of this crisis, many farmers find it difficult to settle the cooperative societies they borrowed money from and it is this type of anger or vexation that usually ignites another round of herdsmen-farmers conflict in Umuelom (Married, Female, 35 years, Farmer, Umuelom, Awka North LGA).

Another interviewee stated:

I am aware of the causes of the conflict between herders and farmers. One of the major causes is the fact that the herders and some farmers have had suspicious and unfriendly relationship in the past because crops, farm lands etc were destroyed with no compensation till date. This unfriendly relationship and problems have been allowed to go on for many years now with no concrete plans put in place to resolve them, and so every little thing can trigger herders-farmers conflict because the old memory readily comes to mind (Married, Male, 44 years, Farmer, Amanuke, Awka North LGA).

Another participant elaborated:

There are many causes of herders-farmers conflict; some of which include overpopulation, long standing beef, water scarcity which sometimes force herders to move around with their cattle. I also feel that sometimes due to unlimited land in this community, many herdsmen end up encroaching on local farmlands, leading to conflict (Married, Female, 31 years, Farmer, Umuelom, Awka North LGA).

H1: There is a significant relationship between the prevalence of herders/farmers conflict and reduced agricultural productivity in Awka North LGA, Anambra State.

The hypothesis was tested through the cross tabulation of questionnaire items (10 and 17) in the table below;

Table 13: Relationship between the Prevalence of Herders/Farmers Conflict and Reduced Agricultural Productivity in Awka North LGA, Anambra State

		<i>Would you say that agricultural productivity in Awka North LGA has reduced/increased?</i>			<i>Total</i>
How you describe the prevalence of herders-farmers conflict in Awka North LGA?		Reduced	Increased	I don't know	
	High	67 (35.6%)	27 (%)	8 (4.3%)	102 (54.3%)
	Moderate	3 (1.6%)	23 (12.2%)	6 (3.2%)	32 (17.0%)
	Low	29 (15.4%)	20 (10.6%)	5 (2.7%)	54 (28.7%)
Total		99 (52.7%)	70 (37.2%)	19 (10.1%)	188 (100.0%)

$\chi^2=34.056$, $df = 4$, $N = 188$, $p \text{ value} = 0.000$

Table 13 shows that there is a significant relationship between the prevalence of herders/farmers conflict and reduced agricultural productivity in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State at $p= 0.000$. This implies that the occurrence of herders/farmers conflict can lead to low agricultural productivity in the area. This effectively means that the prevalence and recurrence of herders/farmers conflict contributes significantly to reduced agricultural productivity in Awka North LGA, Anambra State. The findings of this study revealed that frequent night clashes between farmers and herders in Awka North appear to be the most prevailing nature of the herders-farmers conflict across communities in Awka North L.G.A.

Conclusion:

This study investigated the socio-economic impacts of herder-farmer conflict in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The herder-farmer conflict in Awka North LGA serves as a serious reminder of how closely human livelihoods are tied to the land they share. The study has illuminated the prevailing nature of herder-farmer clashes, which are often characterized by disputes over grazing routes, water resources, and crop destruction. These conflicts have disrupted the peaceful functioning of rural life. The major causes, including climate-driven resource scarcity, land encroachment, reprisal attacks, blockage of grazing routes, and destruction of crops by cattle, have inflicted severe socio-economic consequences on farming households. These include loss of harvests, increased poverty, food insecurity, displacement, and loss of lives during violent clashes and reprisal attacks. However, amidst these challenges in Awka North LGA lies a pathway toward long-term harmony and peaceful coexistence, as outlined in the recommendations section.

Policy Options:

1. The need to provide palliatives for the victims of herders-farmers conflict.
2. The need to create grazing reserves in Awka North LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria. If herders have designated land with grass and water for their cattle, their animals will not stray to destroy farmers' crops and harvests.
3. There is need to establish local development plan in Anambra State to solve the herders-farmers conflicts in Awka North LGA. The establishment of a local development plan can play a major role in reducing and resolving herders-farmers conflicts by tackling the root causes rather than just reacting to violence.
4. Awareness creation on the need for peaceful coexistence between herders and farmers in Awka North LGA. To achieve this goal, regular town hall meetings should be organized in various communities in Awka North. Traditional rulers, town union leaders, farmers and herders can openly discuss grievances, expectations and rules guiding peaceful coexistence.
5. Government should ensure that grazing routes are established in areas that are more susceptible or receptive to herdsmen in Awka North LGA of Anambra State. In essence, government should ensure that grazing routes are established in areas that are more suitable, less conflict-prone, and receptive to herdsmen in Awka North LGA through a carefully planned, participatory and legally backed process.
6. There is need for the provision of compensation and livelihood support mechanisms for affected farmers and herders. Establishing a transparent system for assessing and compensating crop damage or livestock losses will help to reduce anger and revenge attacks. In addition, offering alternative livelihood programmes such as skill sets training and access to credit facilities can help to reduce overdependence on land resources. This approach addresses the socio-economic impacts of the conflict while encouraging peaceful coexistence and long-term stability in Awka North LGA.

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