

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF HERDERS-FARMERS CONFLICT IN ANAMBRA STATE: A STUDY OF SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN AWKA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE, SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the socio-economic impacts of herders–farmers conflict in Anambra State, with a focus on selected communities in Awka North LGA. The study objectives examined the prevailing nature of the herders–farmers conflict, its causes, consequences, and possible solutions for mitigating it. Four theories were reviewed, namely: Conflict Theory, Structural Functionalism Theory, Symbolic Interactionism Theory, and Social Disorganisation Theory. 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. The quantitative data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, simple percentages, and charts. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivo software (Version 2.0). Two hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (χ^2) test statistic. The results indicate, among others, that the major causes of herders–farmers conflict include land encroachment, destruction of crops by cattle, killing of cattle, reprisal attacks, inadequate grazing reserves, and blockage of grazing routes. Also, the major consequences of herders–farmers conflict include destruction of farmlands, loss of lives and property, displacement of local farmers, food insecurity, and discouragement of investors. The study recommends proactive measures such as awareness creation on the need for peaceful coexistence between herders and farmers in Awka North LGA, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Conflict, Farmers, Food production, Herders, Pastoralists.

Introduction:

Historically, the relationship between herders and farmers has remained symbiotic. Herders supplied meat, milk, and manure, while farmers provided grains and other farm products. However, population growth, climate change, desertification, and deforestation have reduced available grazing land and water resources. This has compelled herders to migrate further south, often intruding on farmlands and causing friction. Sayne (2012) aptly captures it thus, desertification in northern Nigeria, coupled with weak local governance, has led to the migration of pastoralists southward, increasing encounters with farmers (Sayne, 2012). These tensions are exacerbated by the absence of formal grazing routes, the weakening of traditional conflict resolution institutions, and increasing criminality disguised as herding.

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.

In Anambra State, the crisis has gradually extended into communities within Awka North Local Government Area, an area traditionally considered peaceful and agriculturally rich. Ubah (2021) reports, several communities including Urum, Amanuke, and Ugbenu have experienced violent clashes triggered by farmland invasion,

destruction of crops, and assault on local farmers by armed herders. These altercations have led to injuries, deaths, and the forced migration of farming populations, with grave implications for rural food production and social cohesion. Land tenure insecurity remains a critical driver of the herder-farmer conflict. Omokhoa and Okuchukwu (2018) found that outdated and poorly enforced land laws contribute to disputes over ownership and usage. Without clear and equitable land policies, both farmers and herders operate in a climate of uncertainty, increasing the likelihood of confrontations. Akinyele (2020) noted that community leaders sometimes collect informal fees from herders for grazing access, leading to resentment and legal ambiguity.

The consequences of the conflict in Awka North are far-reaching. Many farmers now avoid cultivating vast plots of land due to fear of herder attacks. Women and children are disproportionately affected, as they often suffer from displacement, gender based violence, and reduced household food supply. These realities raise urgent questions about the sustainability of local livelihoods, community peace, and the ability of the state government to intervene effectively. According to the West Africa Network for Peace building (2019), the farmer-herder conflict has had devastating effects on rural populations, especially women and youth, who face heightened vulnerability due to insecurity and exclusion from decision-making processes.

Nwankwo (2022) also observed that land use conflict is a major threat to food security in Anambra State, citing the breakdown of traditional land management systems, the influx of nomadic herders due to climate induced migration and government inaction as critical contributors. The situation is worsened by a lack of formal grazing policies, poor security presence, and the failure of intergroup dialogue mechanisms.

Despite increasing scholarship on herder-farmer clashes in Nigeria, communities in Awka North LGA continue to suffer severe and multifaceted socio-economic disruptions. In Amanuke, for example, Ubah (2021) reports that “herders destroyed farmlands resulting in the loss of lives and properties worth millions of naira”. Such incidents not only reduce crop yields but also displace families, undermine household incomes, and erode social cohesion. The gendered impact of the herder-farmer conflict in Awka North is particularly alarming. Women, who are central to subsistence farming and household food provision, face disproportionate risks during violent episodes. According to Ojenya, Obindo, Enejoh, Mwueseter (2024), women and girls in conflict zones experience heightened vulnerability, including sexual violence, displacement, and loss of economic autonomy. Similarly, the Centre for Democracy and Development (2022) highlights that women are often excluded from peace building processes despite being primary victims of the crisis. This exclusion not only undermines gender equity but also weakens the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies.

Migration and displacement resulting from herder-farmer clashes have reshaped the demographic landscape of Awka North. HumAngle Media (2025) reports that the collapse of traditional grazing routes has forced herders into cultivated lands, triggering violent confrontations and mass displacement of farming communities. The CDD (2022) further notes that displaced persons often face challenges in accessing shelter, farmland, and social services, leading to increased poverty and food insecurity. These forced migrations disrupt community structures and create long-term developmental setbacks for affected regions. The erosion of social cohesion in Awka North due to the herder-farmer conflict presents a significant barrier to peace building. Njoku (2021) explains that the breakdown of trust between ethnic groups, coupled with the collapse of traditional cooperation systems like the Ruga, has fragmented community relationships that once supported mutual exchange and conflict resolution. The historical symbiosis between herders and farmers characterized by trade, shared labor, and cultural interdependence has been replaced by suspicion and hostility. Udemadu, Chilokwu, and Nwafor (2023) further emphasize that without deliberate efforts to rebuild intergroup trust and restore inclusive dialogue platforms, sustainable peace will remain elusive.

Conceptual Clarification/Review of Relevant Literature:

Socio-Economic Consequences of the Conflict on Farming Households

The socio-economic consequences of the herder-farmer conflict on farming households in Awka North Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State are profound, multidimensional, and increasingly destabilizing. This conflict, which has escalated in frequency and intensity over the past decade, has disrupted agricultural livelihoods, fractured communal relations, and deepened poverty among rural households. From a sociological perspective, the conflict reflects the breakdown of traditional systems of coexistence and the emergence of new forms of structural violence. According to Nwankwo (2022), farming households in Awka North have experienced significant reductions in cultivable land, crop yields, and household income due to repeated clashes with herders. These disruptions have not only undermined food security but have also triggered a cycle of economic vulnerability and social dislocation. Ojiagu and Ajubiga (2024) further emphasize that land commodification resulting from the conflict has negatively impacted food utilization among cooperative farming households, with statistically significant effects on their nutritional outcomes.

The economic consequences of the conflict are particularly severe for smallholder farmers, who rely on seasonal crop production for subsistence and income. In Awka North, the destruction of crops by cattle, loss of farmland due to encroachment, and displacement caused by violence has led to a sharp decline in agricultural productivity. George et al. (2022) argue that the conflict has reduced the capacity of farming households to invest in inputs, access markets, and maintain consistent production cycles. This has resulted in lower household earnings, increased indebtedness, and a decline in living standards. Nwankwo (2022) supports this view, noting that many farmers have abandoned their farms or shifted to less productive plots due to fear of attacks, thereby compounding the economic losses. The frustration-aggression theory helps explain the behavioral responses of affected households, as economic deprivation often leads to retaliatory violence and further escalation of conflict.

Beyond economic losses, the conflict has had significant social consequences for farming households in Awka North. The breakdown of trust between farmers and herders has eroded traditional mechanisms of cooperation and conflict resolution. Mbih (2020) observes that the increasing frequency of violent encounters has led to the militarization of rural communities, with farmers forming vigilante groups to defend their land. This has created a climate of fear and suspicion, undermining social cohesion and communal harmony. Ojiagu et al. (2022) found that the disruption of transportation routes and local markets due to insecurity has further isolated farming households, limiting their access to essential services and social networks. These developments align with conflict theory, which posits that structural inequalities and competition over scarce resources inevitably lead to social fragmentation and instability.

The conflict has also had gendered implications, disproportionately affecting women who play a central role in agricultural production and household food management. In Awka North, women dominate crop farming, yet they face heightened vulnerability due to the conflict. Nwankwo (2022) reports that women farmers have experienced increased workload, reduced access to farmland, and exposure to physical violence. The loss of income and food resources has forced many women to engage in informal labor or petty trading, often under exploitative conditions. George et al. (2022) highlight that the psychological stress and trauma associated with the conflict have further marginalized women, limiting their participation in community decision making and development initiatives.

Education and health outcomes have also deteriorated among farming households in Awka North as a result of the conflict. The displacement of families and the destruction of property have disrupted children's schooling and access to healthcare services. Mbih (2020) notes that the fear of attacks has led to the closure of rural schools and clinics, forcing families to travel long distances for basic services. This has increased household expenditures and reduced the time available for productive activities. Ojiagu and Ajubiga (2024) found that food insecurity resulting from the conflict has led to malnutrition and poor health outcomes among children and the elderly, further exacerbating the socio-economic burden on affected households. These consequences reflect the broader impact of structural violence, where systemic neglect and institutional failure perpetuate cycles of poverty and exclusion. The coping strategies adopted by farming households in Awka North reveal both resilience and desperation. Many farmers have diversified their income sources, combining crop farming with petty trading, artisanal work, or seasonal migration. Nwankwo (2022) reports that some households have shifted to cultivating less vulnerable crops or adopted mixed farming systems to reduce risk. However, these strategies are often insufficient to offset the losses incurred from the conflict. George et al. (2022) argue that without institutional support, such as access to credit, extension services, and legal protection, farming households will remain trapped in a cycle of vulnerability. The absence of effective government intervention and the failure to implement policies such as open grazing bans and ranching systems have left communities to fend for themselves, reinforcing the structural dimensions of the crisis.

The socio-economic consequences of the herder-farmer conflict on farming households in Awka North LGA are extensive and deeply entrenched. The conflict has disrupted agricultural livelihoods, eroded social cohesion, marginalized women, and compromised education and health outcomes. These effects are not isolated but interconnected, reflecting the broader dynamics of structural violence and institutional failure. One notable empirical study by Sadiq, Singh, Ahmad, and Orifah (2021), titled *Impact of Farmers-Herders Conflict on Livelihoods of Farming Households in Nigeria's Middle-Belt Region*, was conducted in the middle-belt region of Nigeria. The study population consisted of farming households in conflict prone areas, and a total of 290 respondents were selected using a multi stage sampling technique. Data were analyzed using inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the conflict had both short and long term negative impacts on the livelihoods of highly affected households. Specifically, the study found that farm income was significantly reduced due to farmland invasion by herders, which affected the marketable surplus. The income gap between highly and less conflict prone households was more pronounced in farm income (79.3%) compared to non-farm income (55.5%). The results indicated that the conflict had severely hampered the rural economy and contributed to national economic instability. The authors recommended that stakeholders including state and local governments, farmers, and

pastoralists embrace federal initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict to enhance food security and prevent further socio-economic deterioration.

In a related study, Okoro and Peter (2018) examined the broader socio-economic effects of herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria in their work titled *Herdsmen/Farmers Conflict and Its Effects on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria*. Although the study relied on secondary data and adopted a qualitative approach, it provided a comprehensive analysis of the consequences of the conflict. The study was anchored on frustration-aggression and dialectical-materialism theories and utilized content analysis of journals, newspapers, and official reports. The findings revealed that the conflict had led to widespread loss of lives, destruction of properties, displacement of farming communities, and increased distrust among ethnic groups. The study emphasized that food insecurity, unemployment, and economic stagnation were direct outcomes of the conflict. Although the number of respondents was not specified due to the nature of the data, the authors concluded that the conflict had undermined socio-economic development

Obasanmi and Enoma (2022) conducted a study titled *The Effects of Farmer/Herder Conflict on Socioeconomic Development of Nigeria*, focusing on the structural and economic dimensions of the crisis. The study was carried out in Ekpoma, Edo State, and involved 150 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The study population included crop farmers, community leaders, and displaced persons. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings identified climate change, population growth, rural banditry, and cattle rustling as underlying causes of the conflict. The results showed that the conflict had led to displacement, vulnerability of women and girls to economic and sexual exploitation, and a significant loss of revenue for both farmers and the government. The study also found that food supply had dwindled, leading to rising prices and increased poverty among farming households.

A study by Bello (2021), titled *Socio-Economic Impact of Herders-Farmers Conflict in Kaduna State, Nigeria*, adopted a mixed-methods approach to assess the consequences of the conflict on farming households. The study was conducted in Kaduna State and involved 250 respondents selected using multistage sampling. The study population included farmers, herders, and local government officials. Data were collected through surveys and focus group discussions and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the conflict had led to significant loss of income, destruction of farmland, and disruption of social cohesion. Many farming households reported reduced access to markets and inputs, leading to lower productivity and increased poverty. The study also highlighted the psychological trauma experienced by victims and the breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

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:

1. **H1:** There is a significant relationship between herders/farmers conflict and low socio-economic wellbeing of farming households 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

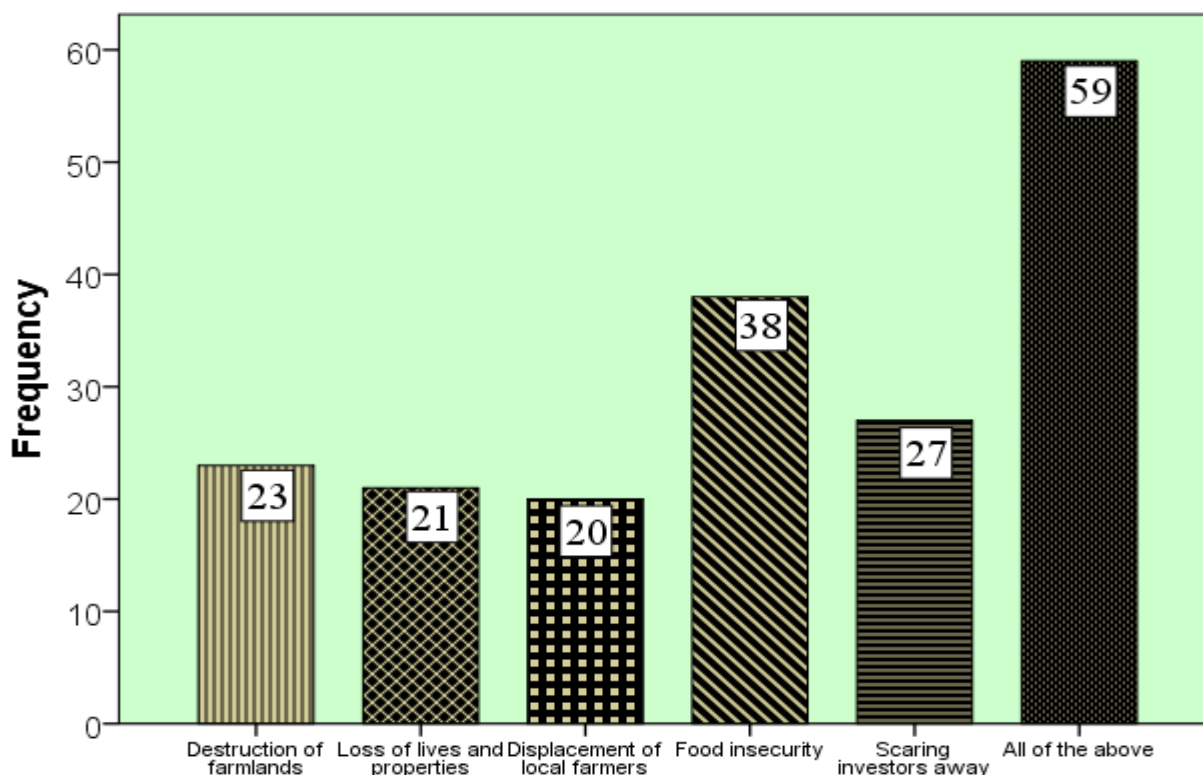
Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents are males while the minority are females. In terms of age category, table 1 indicates that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 18–27 while the minority are 48 years and above. In terms of marital status, majority of the respondents indicated 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 Worshipers. 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 familiarity with the Socio-economic Effects of Herders-Farmers Conflict on Farming Households and Rural Communities in Awka North L.G.A

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	112	59.6
No	76	40.4
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents indicated that they are familiar with the socio-economic effects of the herders-farmers conflict on farming households and rural communities in Awka North L.G.A whereas the minority of the respondents have no idea.



Field Survey, 2025

Fig. 1: Respondents' Views on the Major Socio-economic Effects of Herders-Farmers Conflict on Farming Households and Rural Communities in Awka North L.G.A

Fig. 1 shows that majority of the respondents indicated all of the above as the socio-economic effects of herders-farmers conflict on farming households in Awka North L.G.A while the minority identified displacement of local farmers. This implies that majority of the respondents are familiar with the study under investigation. This agrees with the qualitative data. One of the interviewees stated:

The herders-farmers conflict in Awka North LGA has greatly affected the social and economic lives of farming households. Take for example; many families in Umuelom depend on farming as their main source of food and income. When clashes occur and farmlands are destroyed, these households tend to lose their major means of survival. This reduces their income and makes it difficult for them to meet basic needs like feeding; education and healthcare (Married, Female, 35 years, Farmer, Umuelom, Awka North LGA).

Another interviewee posited:

Seriously, the repeated conflict between herders and farmers has led to decline in crop production in Amanuke. Many farmers have abandoned their farmlands due to fear of attacks or destruction by cattle. As a result, food supply in the area has dropped, thereby causing prices of farm produce such as yam, maize and cassava to rise. This makes life harder for both farmers and non-farmers (Married, Male, 44 years, Farmer, Amanuke, Awka North LGA).

Another participant stated:

Apart from loss of lives, the price of commodities in Amanuke and environs are usually affected whenever there is conflict between herders and farmers. Herders-farmers conflict also means that a lot of farmers will be reluctant to go to their farmlands for fear of the unknown and this can lead to high cost of food stuffs in the market, starvation, death and hardships for many families (Single, Male, 27 years, Herder, Amanuke, Awka North LGA).

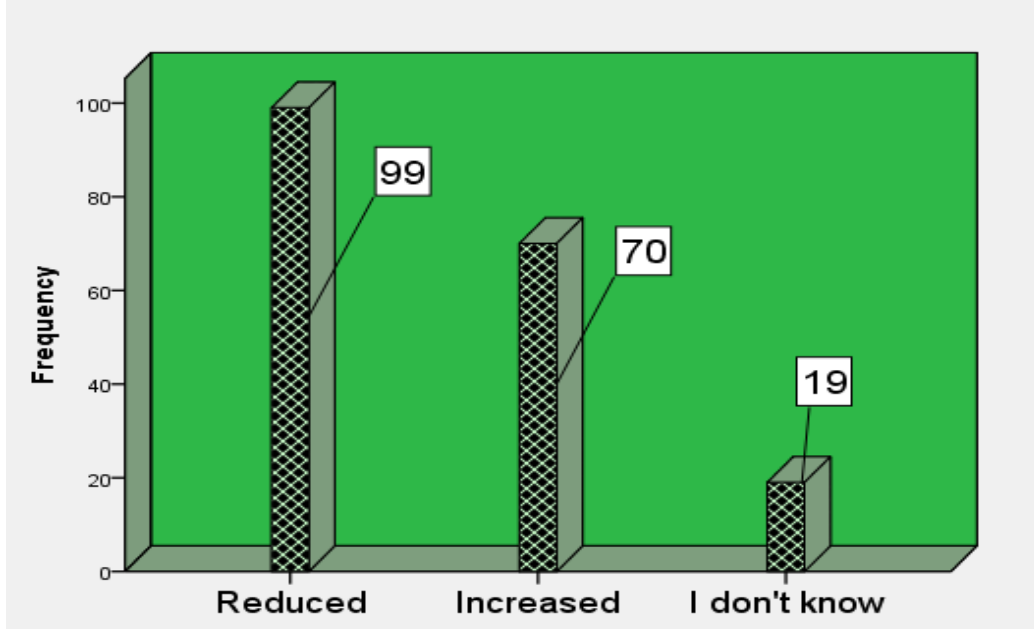
Table 3: Respondents' Views on How Herders-Farmers Conflict Affect Farmers and the Availability of Food in Awka North LGA

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Farmers may be reluctant to go to farm	56	29.8
Reduction in farm output	11	5.9
Loss of crops and animals	16	8.5

Killing of farmers	30	16.0
Poor harvests and high cost of food in the market	75	39.9
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents identified poor harvests and high cost of food in the market as some of the major socio-economic effects of the herders-farmers conflict on farming households and rural communities in Awka North, L.G.A, Anambra State. Also, the minority of the respondents went for reduction in farm output. This implies that herders-farmers conflicts often result in food insecurity in Awka North LGA.



Field Survey, 2025

Fig. 2: Respondents' Views on whether or not Agricultural Productivity in Awka North LGA has Reduced/Increased

Fig. 2 shows that majority of the respondents indicated that agricultural productivity in Awka North LGA has reduced. On the other hand, minority of the respondents indicated that they don't know. This finding is obvious because whenever there is clash between herders and farmers, food supply tend to reduce in the study area.

Table 4: Respondents' Views on the Socio-economic Well-Being of Farming Households in Awka North L.G.A

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
High	50	26.6
Moderate	58	30.9
Low	80	42.6
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents described the socio-economic well-being of farming households in Awka North Local Government Area as low while the minority of the respondents described it as high. This implies that farmers in Awka North LGA top the list of residents that are affected by herders-farmers conflict in the area.

Table 5: Respondents' Views on the Most Affected when there is Herders-Farmers Conflict in Awka North LGA

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Farmers	61	32.4
Herders	10	5.3
Innocent residents	44	23.4
All of the above	73	38.8
Total	188	100.0

Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 shows that majority of the respondents indicated all of the above as people that will likely be affected whenever there is herders-farmers conflict in Awka North Local Government Area. Again, the minority of the respondents identified herders as the specific group of people that will be affected during herders-farmers conflict.

This implies that whenever herders-farmers conflicts occur in Awka North LGA farmers, herders and innocent residents are likely to be affected.

Hypothesis Two: There is a significant relationship between herders/farmers conflict and low socio-economic wellbeing of farming households in Awka North LGA, Anambra State.

Hypothesis two was tested through the cross tabulation of study variables (i.e., questionnaire items 12 and 18) in the table below.

Table 14: Relationship between Herders/Farmers Conflict and Low Socio-Economic Wellbeing of Farming Households in Awka North LGA, Anambra State

		<i>Kindly describe the socio-economic well-being of farming households in Awka North L.G.A?</i>			
		High	Moderate	Low	Total
Are you aware of the existence of herders-farmers conflict in Awka North L.G.A, Anambra State?	Yes	27 (14.4%)	36 (19.1%)	42 (22.3%)	105 (55.9%)
	No	23 (12.2%)	22 (11.7%)	38 (20.2%)	83 (44.1%)
Total		50 (26.6%)	58 (30.9%)	80 (42.6%)	188 (100.0%)

$\chi^2=29.366, df = 2, N = 188, p \text{ value} = 0.000$

Table 14 shows that there is a statistical relationship between herders/farmers conflict and low socio-economic wellbeing of farming households in Awka North LGA $p= 0.000$. More specifically, the $p\text{-value}$ (0.000) shows a very high level of significance. This implies that there is a significant relationship between herders/farmers conflict and low socio-economic wellbeing of farmers in Awka North LGA. In other words, herders/farmers conflict leads to low socio-economic wellbeing of farming households in Awka North LGA, Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings 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. First, majority of the respondents were familiar with the socio-economic effects of herders-farmers conflict on farming households in Awka North. The major socio-economic effects of herders-farmers conflict in Awka North, L.G.A include; destruction of farmlands, loss of lives and properties, displacement of local farmers, food insecurity and scaring investors away. More results revealed that poor harvests and high cost of food in the market are some of the ways that herders-farmers conflict can affect the availability of food in Awka North LGA. Other effects are as follows: farmers may be reluctant to go to farm, reduction in farm output, loss of crops and animals and killing of farmers. This study confirmed that agricultural productivity in Awka North LGA has reduced and this has led to low socio-economic well-being of farmers and low income households in Awka North L.G.A. It was discovered that whenever there is herders-farmers conflict, victims usually include farmers, herders and innocent residents. This supports the study by Obasanmi and Enoma (2022) which was carried out in Ekpoma, Edo State and found that major socio-economic effects of herders-farmers conflict on farming households in Ekpoma include destruction of farmlands, loss of lives and properties, displacement of local farmers, food insecurity and scaring investors away.

The hypothesis confirmed that there is a significant relationship between herders/farmers conflict and low socio-economic wellbeing of farming households in Awka North LGA, Anambra State. In other words, herders/farmers conflict leads to low socio-economic wellbeing of farming households in Awka North LGA, Anambra State.

Conclusion

This study investigated the socio-economic impacts of the herders–farmers conflict in Awka North LGA of Anambra State. The herders–farmers conflict in Awka North LGA serves as a serious reminder of how deeply human livelihoods are connected to the land they depend on. The study revealed that the prevailing nature of herders–farmers clashes is often characterized by disputes over grazing routes, water resources, and crop destruction, which have disrupted the peaceful flow of rural life. The major causes include climate-induced scarcity, land encroachment, reprisal attacks, blockage of grazing routes, and destruction of crops by cattle. These factors have inflicted significant socio-economic challenges on farming households, leading to poor harvests, increased poverty, food insecurity, and loss of lives during violent clashes and reprisal attacks. However, despite these challenges in Awka North LGA, there remains a pathway to long-term harmony and peaceful coexistence, as discussed in the recommendations section.

5.3 Recommendations

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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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