



SILAGE

A POTENTIAL SOLUTION TO THE FARMER-HERDER CONFLICTS THAT HAVE KILLED TENS OF THOUSANDS IN WEST AFRICA - A MISSIONARY'S PERSPECTIVE



FIGURE 1. PASTORALIST HERDERS WITH THEIR SMALL RUMINANTS.

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More than 60,000 people have been killed and millions displaced in Nigeria since 2001 due to farmer-herder conflicts in over 60% of the states. Although other factors are involved (Figure 2), these needless deaths resulted from seasonal migration by nomadic pastoralists who encroach on farmer's land, some of which is on their historical grazing routes, in search of feed and water. The problem is worsened during the dry season, when pasture in rangelands is scarce and prices of crop byproducts and concentrates escalate.

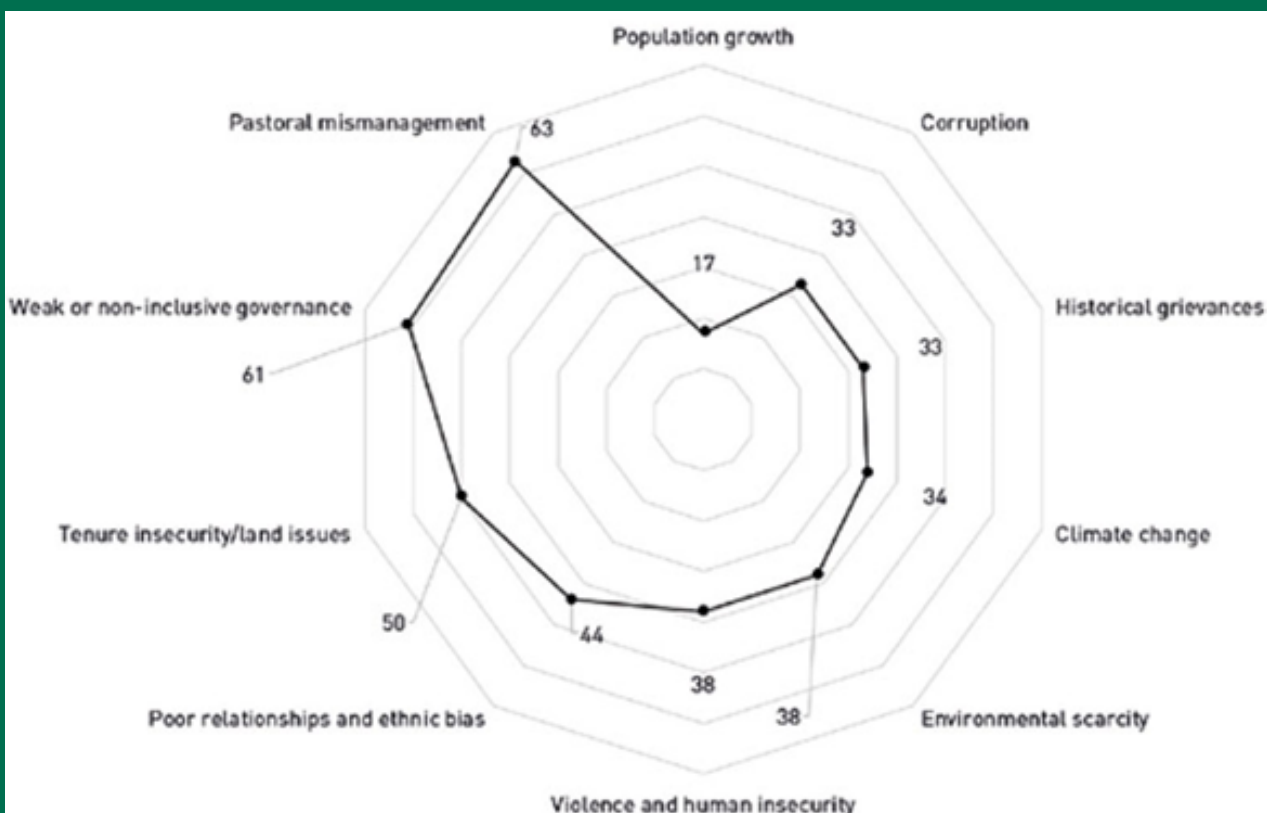


FIGURE 2. CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND FREQUENCY OF MENTION OF FARMER HERDER CONFLICT FROM A SYSTEMATIC SCOPING LITERATURE REVIEW, FLINTAN ET AL. (2024).

THE ALTERNATIVE, BETTER FEED:

An alternative for feeding livestock in the wet and dry season.

Higher in nutritional value than hay and crop residues.

Improved livelihoods and incomes in South Omo, Ethiopia (Gates Foundation funding).

Corn silage has improved livelihoods, beef production and rural incomes in Langzhou, China.

THE PROMISING SOLUTION:

Silage is rarely made by nomadic smallholder pastoralists due to lack of technical information, the prohibitive cost of equipment and silos, and seasonal migration of the herders.

This problem could be solved by private sector silage production at and or transportation to, strategic sites along pastoral routes for sale at affordable prices. Alternatively, the silage can be made and or transported by silage cooperative unions involving semi-nomadic and sedentary pastoralists, who are trained, equipped and resourced.

To minimize transport of water, haylage or various silage drying strategies should be investigated.

Research must be embedded in the comprehensive framework for solving farmer herder conflicts with core elements including interconnected causes, contextual understanding, avoiding oversimplification, uncovering hidden stakeholders and causes, integration of multiple disciplines, policy intervention and complexity visualization (Suleiman et al., 2024) to solve the incessant and horrific farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria and much of West Africa.

References

Suleiman, H. M., Flintan, F., B. Eba, and M. Nassef. 2025. Rural 21, the international journal for rural development. In press.

Adigun, O. W. 2022. The trends and dynamics of Nigeria's farmer-herder conflicts (2014-2019). [Research Report] IFRA-Nigeria Working Papers Series 85, IFRA-Nigeria. 2022, pp.1-15. fahal-03762007f