



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

Effect of Communal Conflicts from Farm Land Use in Cross River State, Nigeria

DAMIAN AGOM¹, EDDY ATTE ENYENIHI²

¹*Akwa Ibom State University, Dept. of Agricultural Economics and Extension, Nigeria*

²*University of Uyo, Agricultural Economics and Extension, Nigeria*

Abstract

Land is considered as the most important community asset and is passed down from one generation to another. People therefore go all out to defend the territorial integrity of their communities irrespective of the consequences. This paper examined the incidence of communal clashes as a result of disputes over farm land use in communities that have suffered clashes and losses in Cross River State, Nigeria. The land ownership structure in the area was also examined as well as the causes and effects of conflicts in farm land use. Data was collected through key informants interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation from selected conflict affected communities. The paper revealed that land was acquired mainly by communities through the clearing of virgin forests. Community boundaries are usually very well known and are set using major landmarks like streams, rivers and trees. Conflicts however arise over time as a result of incomplete information passed down to the next generation, mischievous and misguided leaders/youths, selfishness and greed of some community members, and population growth that puts pressure on available land. Some of the conflicts when unresolved are passed from one generation to another and seasonally the communities have to fight over the disputed farm land. Clashes escalate after one party attacks the other and there is bloodshed or loss of life. These clashes have resulted in great psychological trauma on people, generational investment losses, loss of human lives and food insecurity. The paper recommends that community leaders should always explore the peaceful approach to conflict resolution; government law enforcement should always be at alert to contain and stop clashes before they escalate and boundary delineations should be well spelt out at every opportunity to make for good information flow.

Keywords: Communal conflicts, destruction, farming, food security, land use