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Impact of Large-Scale Land Holdings on Fulani Pastoralists’ Livelihoods in Agogo Traditional Area of Ghana

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Abstract

Following growing demand for land in Africa, there is increased land tenure insecurity for minority groups including pastoralists, limited resources for pastoralists, and contestations over access and use of land. The situation intensifies with increasing land value and scarcity as a result of commoditisation, individualisation and commercialisation of land within a new era of ‘land grabbing’ where there are increased investments in land by bigger agro-companies as well as farmers desire to increase their production. This has many consequences for pastoralists’ livelihoods as they have limited access to land and resources for their cattle. This paper examined the impacts of large-scale land holdings on Fulani pastoralists’ livelihoods in Agogo, Ghana through comparison of pastoralists land acquisitions and the insecurity thereof on one hand and the large-scale land acquisition of Scanfarms Ltd and two other plantation companies in the area. The study used a case study of Scanfarms Ltd land acquisition and also interviews with farmers, officials of Bunfuom Teak Plantation Ltd, Bernard Kojo Offori Teak Plantation Ltd, Fulani pastoralists, cattle owners, chiefs and officials of the land commission (137 respondents) for the analysis of the paper. The study found that due to perceived ‘land grabbing’ and the economic value of land, there are increased competitions for land. Small-scale holder farmers, Fulani pastoralists and large-scale companies are scouting for more land run through common property management. These competitions for land by large scale land holding companies and farmers alike have tended to affect pastoralists livelihoods negatively. As the pastoralists continually have limited access to land and crops are grown on pasture lands and paths, there is increased destruction of crops by cattle leading to violent conflicts. Besides, pastoralists face high land tenure insecurity as farmers and land owners seized their leased lands and are reacquired by agro companies which affect resources for pastoralists’ cattle. Grazing Lands in areas like Dukusen, Behome, Abrawapong and Afrisire, hitherto acquired by Fulani pastoralists for their cattle were seized and now turned into farms and plantations making it difficult to get land for grazing pasture.

Keywords: Agogo, Fulani pastoralists, Ghana, impact, large-scale land holdings, livelihoods