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This Is Our Land – Resource Conflict and Arable Crop Production: Evidence from Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

It has been said that Africa’s soil is the next gold mine. But land resource is becoming a major source of contention between stakeholders; this threatens crop production activities and ultimately the food security situation of the region. But empirical evidence on the drivers of the conflict, the measurement of conflict, the extent and direction of its effect on arable crop production, particularly in developing countries where food production is largely dependent on small holder farmers is required. This study provides some evidence by examining farmer-herdsmen conflict in some rural communities in Ogun state, Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 150 farmers from who data were collected through oral interviews with the aid of a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using descriptive and regression tools. The results show that 60 percent of the respondents had no alternative source of income; the average farm income was about \$ 250 per annum and over 70 percent had experienced fights with herdsmen over their land. The drivers of the conflict include land encroachment by herders, killing of stray cattle by farmers, decreasing economic productivity and decreasing consumption rates. Conflict-index was generated from farmer responses; the logistic regression shows that it has a potentially negative effect on food crop production in the area. The study recommends local community action for effective management of the situation through bridge building. Further research is also required to examine possible synergies and models of community action that will diffuse tensions effectively.

Keywords: Land, community, conflict, food security, production, tension