

CONFRONTING THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CROP FARMERS AND FULANI HERDSMEN IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper highlights the meaning of pastoral farming system. It is done mainly by the Fulani in Nigeria. It also discusses the different types of nomadic farming and the cause of problem between the Fulani herdsmen and crop farmers. The cause of problem ranges from increase in population, non-availability of land for agricultural purpose, climate, destruction of grazing area, pest and disease problems. Ranching was suggested as the solution to this problem together with inclusion of vocational agriculture in the curriculum of nomadic education, establishment of demonstration farm and public enlightenment.

Introduction

Livestock farming or pastoral farming is a method of farming that involves keeping of farm animals or livestock for social economic reasons (Akanbi and Olabode, 2017). Pastoral system of farming is 100% livestock farming. It is an important way of life which involves millions of farmers that occupy dry lands in Africa and Nigeria. Pastoral farming is a form of subsistence agriculture based on the rearing or herding of domestic animals. It is adapted to dry climate where intensive commercial agricultural is difficult or impossible. Pastoral nomadic lives in the arid and semi-arid belts of Nigeria and the Fulani of West-Africa in general and Nigeria to be specific are examples of nomadic farmers. Fulani Herdsmen are a group of people who are shepherds and cattle herders (gatherers of cattle's). They are noted to be migrants or people moving from one area to another. They speak Hausa language generally, but they specifically have their own dialect known as 'Fufude'. These class of people are mostly Muslims (Trubire, 2018). Gordon (2000) reported that more than 30million Fulani people are living in the northern states of Nigeria.

Classification of Fulani nomads

Fulani nomads or pastoral farmers can be classified according to the degree of movement of both the animals and those who lead them, (Buhari

et al., 2018). These groups are:

- i. Transhumance: This is known to be a seasonal migration of the nomads and their livestock between mountains and lowlands pastures in search of green pasture following changes in climate and vegetation. In Nigeria, this occurs during the dry season. The Fulani move their cattle to the south western states where pastures and water are abounding, and when condition becomes favourable they return to the north in order to escape from the attack of tse-tse fly infestation which is prevalent in the South.
- ii. Sedentary livestock farming: This is a situation where the animals remain on the holdings or within the vicinity of the farmer throughout the entire year, in this situation a pastoralist attends to their farmers and as well as keeping their cattle's, goats and sheep.
- iii. True or Total nomadic farming: This activity is true of the Fulani men in Nigeria, who are constantly in the move with their large herds of cattle and consider nomadism as a way of life. These groups of people do not have permanent place of residence, they also do not practice regular cultivation, but instead they move about with their families and herds.

Problems and Conflicts Caused by Fulani Herdsmen

Problems and conflicts caused by Fulani herdsmen can be associated to so many factors such as non-Agricultural uses of land by rich men. Over population, historical and cultural influences Trubire (2018). Increase in population of Nigeria from 3.3million in 1950 to 192.3million in recent year is one of the major problems causing conflict in Nigeria, because this has led to the use of land for non-agricultural purposes e.g. industries, schools, etc. According to the law promulgated on 29th of March 1979, certain percentages of land is to be used for Agricultural purposes, about 5000 hectares to be used for cultural or social infrastructures but due to lack of understanding and lawless attitude people acquired land and convert it to commercial purposes. It was reported in January 2013 that the Fulani herdsmen attacked some village, while many people were killed. over 4000 people were also displaced Mikailu (2016)Ndubaisi (2018).

Conflict between Muslims and Christian has also contributed to increasing violence, and migration attitude of herdsmen, which led to destruction of crops along the line in the process of trying to protect their farms and crops. Fulani herdsmen tends to kill or injured the farmers, as some of the farm owners will have to abound their different homes (Christopher 2018). In addition to increase in population that created the problem between the farmers and herdsmen in Nigeria. The movement of Fulani herdsmen from rural to urban and semi urban –area of Nigeria also caused this conflict. Most of the livestock are kept under extensive system where animals are exposed to industrial waste, oil spills and domestic effluents, which might have Seasonal effect on the health of the animals. And for a country that has as an annual record over a thousand oil spillages pollution of soil leads to destruction of pasture land and death of animals.

The drive to increase food production, has caused many Nigerian farmers to use pesticides on their farms. Animals in search of forage and water are often killed when they come in contact with pesticide treated farms and contaminated water. When animal come in polluted water and farm, the residual effect on the health of the animals. The destruction of grazing land in the drive to increase food production to feed the growing population

has led to exploitation and destruction of vast areas of grazing land for agricultural purpose, over 1000 hectares of Savannah bush in Kanji Lake Basin have been reported to be cleared Akanbi and Olabode (2017). An act of indiscriminate cultivation of Agricultural use for grazing has destroyed many grazing land which also has resulted in regimentation of rivers.

Geographers and meteorologists have observed that climate elements have a direct or indirect influence on the quality, quantity and distribution of livestock in Nigeria. There is a gross seasonal climatic shift, high ambient temperature and the unpredictable micro climatic changes necessitate movement of nomadic herdsmen. Pastoralists have experience reoccurring droughts, between the Sahel and Guinea Savannah reveals that incessant drought leads to crop failure and water scarcities. During droughts, animals die of thirst, hunger and exhaustion. Drought causes hunger, poverty, diseases, and destitution leave the pastoralist at the mercy of the sedentary society. During drought, herdsmen will have to keep goats and drought –tolerant animals in place of cows. Despite step-by the pastoralist against human and natural disaster drought and desertification continues to engulf pasture tracts.

High morbidity and mortality rate between wild and domestic animals are caused by insects. Because of the tolerance of tse-tse fly to high temperature and low humidity, the insects plague the forest and Guinea savanna, as a result of prevalence of the insect in the sub humid region most to the goats, cattle, and camels and donkey are raised in tse-tse fly free area. In human being, the tse-tse fly causes a sleeping sickness, and for decades the endemic condition of Glossina and typanosomiasis has severely crippled the potential of Nigeria. Consequence of tse-tse fly prevents the expansion of commercial ranching in Nigeria. The production of livestock in Nigeria is being threatened by disease, apart from typanosomiasis the most common infectious diseases are anthrax rinder pest, foot and mouth rot disease, blacky and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, also the parasitic tape worms, round worms, and globular stock worms. In as much as we have problems and or conflict between the Fulani herds men and farmers, in different parts Nigeria especially the Southern part or western part of Nigeria; there are

still a lot of economic importance derived from pastoral farming or Fulani herdsmen.

Animals are belief to process a wide range of uses cattle are properties and they represent variable degree of wealth of social station of community influence. They are man's legacy to his children. More than 80% of Nigerian depends on pastoral Fulani for meat, butter, animal hides and skin. Fat of animal are used as food and cosmetic; their horns and hooves provides smoothly holders feather boxes, food containers. While their dropping serve as fertilizer. In the villages, the Fulani provides bulls used for carting, ploughing and handling, in the rural areas cows provide power for ploughing, moving goods and drawing water from wells. Thousands of Nigerians wholly and partly makes a living from selling, milking, butchery or transporting herds. The government earns revenue from cattle trade and cattle tax, the Fulani, therefore plays an important role in the economy and nutrition of Nigeria.

Possible solutions to the Conflict

- i. **Ranching:** Cattle ranching is a kind of livestock farming aimed at tendering and growing cattle as source of meat, milk and work for man benefits. A ranch is a settled form of cattle farming where the farmers control to a reasonable extent, the movement of the stock and feeding requirement. This is different from pastoral system where the stock could move from one location to another in search of pasture.
- ii. **Inclusion of vocational agriculture in the curriculum of nomadic school:** This ranching should be taught by teachers to the nomadic school students both at primary and secondary education level. This will provide the children of the Fulani pastoralist to be aware of ranching and other benefit that is associated with it. The introduction of this ranching programme to the children of these Fulani pastoralist will go a long way to correct the impression of pastoral farming way of life.
- iii. **Demonstration farms:** Seen is believing. Government should establish ranching community in different area of Nigeria and provide necessary fund to sustain this

ranch settlement. This will afford the pastoralist /nomadic farmer to see the importance of ranching. They will be able to appreciate further all the advantages of ranching over there pastoral way of life.

- iv. **Public enlightens on ranching:** Extension workers should be trained, mobilized and allow visiting various nomadic community to educate the pastoral farmers on ranching. Radio programmes in Hausa and Fufude to be used to further educate farmers on ranching. Even if need be, religious bodies should also be encouraged to preach ranching to the Fulani herdsmen. If all these are done, it will go a long way to address the problems between the Fulani and crop farmers.

Conclusion

The problem posed by the conflict between Fulani and crop farmers is a threat to nation security and unity of the country. Ranching, with inclusion of vocational agriculture in the curriculum of nomadic education, establishment of demonstration farm by government and public enlightenment seem to be the solutions to this problem.

Recommendations

Provision of water for irrigation of ranches farmland to sustain vegetative growth of grasses during dry season especially in the northern part. Government should look for a way to convert Sambiza forest and use it as a ranch settlement for Fulani herdsmen.

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