



## **Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict in Nigeria: Implications for National Integration (A Study of Benue State)**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

The study examines herder - framers conflict: implication for development in Nigeria, a study of Benue state. The objectives of the study is to find out the causes of farmer's pastoralist conflicts and food security in Benue state and find out the socio- economic effect of the conflict on the farmers in the state. The research review literature on security, types of security and food security in Nigeria, the democratic peace theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. The data used in this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources, the primary method of data collection included the use of a research instrument which is the questionnaire. Secondary sources of data collection on the other hand, included textbooks, journal, government documents and internet materials. The study adopted the use of simple percentage, tables and descriptive content approach for data analysis. The study revealed that clashes between farmers and herdsmen have left in its trail heavy losses of lives and property. These losses of lives have adversely affected farming activities and other related businesses. This has resulted in a drastic reduction in farm outputs, a development that has heightened the fear of hunger. Already most farmers in the affected states have abandoned farms for fear of being attacked by the herdsmen. The opinion of many citizens of Benue State is that Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen are seeking to invade and occupy territories in the state, with the aim of spreading Islam, the ultimate goal being to undermine Christianity and the homeland rights of indigenous Christians. This opinion would seem to be confirmed by the increasing numbers of Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen entering the state, as well as by the sharp increase in the number of attacks against indigenous Christian communities. Finally, the study made useful recommendations, both herdsmen and farmers should stop making hate speeches because hate speeches encourage anger and destroys unity. And those making hate speeches should be brought to book.



## 1.1 Background to the study

Globally, the issue of security, peace, development and national integration is at the centre stage of local, national and international discourse. States, especially developing ones are constantly in search for security (Barry, 2013). Nigeria is post-colonial state in its form and Post – colonial state is tied to the offshoot of imperialism. Over the years, different governments, individuals and institutions in Nigeria have systematically entrenched a culture of marginalization, inequality within the social order. The modern social system has produced widespread violence, arbitrary hierarchies and avoidable deprivation that have snowballed into serious national security challenges, (Philip, 2013 in Wosu and Destiny, 2014). Anter (2017) asserts that the Fulanis are traditionally a nomadic, pastoralist, tracking people, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry hinterlands of their domain, keeping somewhat separate from the local agricultural population.

Conflicts between farmers and nomadic cattle herders have been a common feature of economic livelihood in West Africa (Tonah, 2016). In the period before the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the problem was mainly restricted to the savanna belts of West Africa. Cattle rearing were mainly prevalent in the Guinea, Sudan and Sahel savanna belts where crop production was carried out only during the short rainy season on a small scale. This gave the cattle herders access to a vast area of grass land. As time went on, and with the introduction of irrigated farming in the Savanna belt of Nigeria, and the increased withering of pasture during the dry season, less pasture was available to cattle herders. The herdsmen had to move southward to the coastal zone where the rainy season is longer and the soil retains moisture for long, in search of pasture and water a movement called transhumance. The large number of wild animals and the fear of losing animals to diseases, especially trypanosomiasis, prevented



herders from settling permanently in the humid zone (Blench, 1994). Tonah (2016) stated that there is a consensus among observers that farmers-herders clashes have only since the 20th century become widespread in the coastal countries of West Africa., though Breusers, Nederlof and Van (2018) were of a dissenting view. They concluded after an investigation of farmers-herders relations in Burkina Faso that the conflict between Mossi farmers and Fulani herders was an old phenomenon. Tonah (2016) opined that the factors that account for the increasing farmer-herder conflict include the southward movement of pastoral herds into the humid and sub-humid zones, promoted by the successful control of the menace posed by disease, the widespread availability of veterinary medicine and the expansion of farming activities into areas that hitherto served as pastureland. He further suggested that since the 1950s there has been a growth in human as well as livestock population in the coastal countries of West Africa. This gave rise to an increased pressure on natural resources and a stiff competition for available resources between farmers and herders (Adebayo, 2017; Breuser et al 2018; Bermadet, 2019).

With an increasing population, the need to expand the capacity of agricultural production to feed the teeming population is very crucial. Benue state therefore stands a better chance of contributing immensely to this due to her position as Food basket of the country. The state's economy is driven by agricultural prowess because of her rich produce which include yam, rice, bean, cassava, sweet-potato, maize, soybean, sorghum, millet, sesame, cocoyam, etc. the state accounts for over 70% of Nigeria's Soybean production. The state as one of the highest farming population (657,767 crop farmers as at 2010) in Nigeria is also endowed with one of the longest stretches of river (River Benue) in the country with great potential for a viable fishing industry, dry season farming through irrigation and for an inland water-way. Furthermore, in the state, the records of cassava production show that the total number of farm families involved in the production were 413159 (Bnarda, 2017). The State can boast of a great



deal of livestock resources like goats, though the major occupation is crop farming, a lot of fishing activities on Rivers Benue and Katsina-ala are carried out; irrigation is widely practiced along the riverine areas during the dry season; growing vegetable crops such as tomatoes, okro, carrot, onion, pepper and amaratus in large quantities. It is also common practice to find each farming family keeping one from of livestock or the other such as poultry, rabitry, piggery, seep and goat on a small scale. Poultry, sheep, pigs and cattle are traditionally reared on free holder farmers. The strategic location of Benue State between the Southern forest regions and the Northern semi and grassland regions of the country makes it easy to have fertile land for agriculture with the estimated arable land constituting about 60 percent of the total area. Average farm size is 1.5 to 2.0 hectares (Bnarda, 2017).

## 1.2 Research Questions

This paper will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the causes of farmer's pastoralist conflicts and food security in Nigeria?
2. What are the implications of farmers-herders conflict on Nigeria's national integration?
3. What is the socio- economic effect of the conflict on the farmers in Nigeria?
4. What is the level of acceptability of nomads by host communities in Benue state?
5. What are the intervention strategies in the resolution of such conflict?

## 1.3 Empirical Literature

According to Mesjasz (2014), the English word, security originated from the Latin word "securus", "se" means without and "curus" means "uneasiness". That is, "security" originally meant liberation from uneasiness, or a peaceful situation without any risks or a peaceful



situation without any risks or threats. The English word “security” has a broad range of meanings including “to feel safe” and “to be protected” and it is used to describe a situation without any risks or worries. From the foregoing, According to Jatan (2017) the term security can be used in four meanings:

1. Traditional meaning of security perceives security as an attribute of state, absence of military conflicts or military security;
2. Security used in a broader sense to refer directly to the phenomena taking place international relations or directly or indirectly caused by inter-state relations;
3. Security is seen as public good; and
4. Security in a universal sense includes human security.

According to Baldwin (2017), security is defined as the absence of threat to acquired values. However, this definition was modified because of the difficulty encountered in the operationalization of absence. In this vein, security is defined as low probability of damage to acquired values. It is pointed out that writers usually fail to offer any definition of security and if one is given, it is usually not accompanied by an explanation of the reasons for choosing one definition instead of another definition. Thus, security is better described as a confused or inadequately clarified concept, more than a contested concept as some authors argue. Given the foregoing scenario, “national security can be dangerously ambiguous concept if it is used without specifications that facilitate analyzing the rationality of security policy. It is important to define security as a policy objective and proceed to defining policies for pursuing the objectives” Boemcken and Schetter (2017) submitted that security is the absence of severe threats to the lowest acceptable levels of fundamental values that a people take to be important to their survival. The foregoing definition of security is an attempt to capture the hidden



importance of the term. Nevertheless, security may still be conceptualized in different ways. In doing this, the critical question to ask is: security for whom? The answer to this question may be located in some or all individuals, to some or all states. Security may also be used to diverse objects such as animal life, the biosphere or the physical infrastructure. The issue of environmental security is not a well specified security concept (Allenby, 2011).

In its general usage the term “conflict” suggests difference by Hocker Wilmot (1985), conflict is the interaction of independent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving goals. Ukaegbu and Agunwamba (1995) had earlier opined that conflict or consensus is the two main patterns of social interactionism. Main stream conflict theory views constant antagonism over scarce resources as the fundamental cause of conflict between economic agents (Tonah, 2016). All conflicts share common qualities. The first is that there is a kind of contact between the parties that are involved; secondly, the parties in conflict perceive conflicting views; and finally, one of the parties always wants to redress existing contradictions, (Vanderlin, 2005; Ekanola, 2004; Deutsh, 1991).

Every farming system such as nomadic cattle herding has a boundary, which separates it from the larger system, which make up the environment. The boundary represents the limits in the larger system. Farmers increasingly compete with nomadic herders for farmland, pastures, water, trees and the use of rangeland in general (Akpaki, 2012). There is a clear demarcation between different types of conflict in farmer-nomadic herders’ relations. Hagberg (2018) has likewise made a distinction between the various types of conflicts in farmer-nomadic relations. He differentiates between disputes among individuals and groups, conflict of interest and violent conflicts. While dispute refers to disagreement between two or more persons or groups, a violent conflict involves mayhem, the destruction and killing of persons and livestock, arising from a dispute. A conflict of interest, on the other hand, is seen as the adoption of opposing



views and concerns by different actors, which usually takes the form of non-violent competition, for control of resources in a given area.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework - The Democratic Peace Theory**

This study adopts the Democratic Peace Theory to explain the Security and integration challenges in Nigerian. According to this theory, security largely depends on encouraging liberal institutions to discharge their responsibilities creditably; and a security policy must have as its long-term the spread of liberalism (Doyle, (1998). Therefore, the route to peace is to encourage democratic system, the universal respect for human rights and the development of civil society. Such conclusion depends largely on untroubled and robust correlation between the democratic nature of a state and peaceful inclination. Thus, the democratic peace theory assumes that liberal states do not fight wars against other liberal states. This theory was first enunciated in a keynote article by Michael Doyle in Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs (Doyle, 1998). Thus, Doyle argued that there was a difference in liberal practice towards liberal societies and liberal practice towards non-liberal societies.

#### **1.5 Methodology**

This research falls under the survey typology. The following techniques of data collection involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Basically the collection of quantitative data engaged the use of questionnaire, which was used as major instrument for data collection for the research. The questionnaire was preferred because it was found to be more-efficient, it allowed for collection of raw data within the time frame and financial resources available to the researcher. The nature of each question was determined in relation to the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was mixed with close-ended and open-ended questions. In order to complement the primary data, secondary data will be employed, examination of some documentary researches in which more than two magazines, journals, textbooks, and newspapers were examined.



Although the entire population of Benue state is over 4,253,641 people. This population will be drawn from the selected areas. The population comprises of adult men, women and youths (Nigeria population Census of 2016).

Thus:

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

(Rasul, 2009: 1)  
Therefore, to determine the sample size of participants that were drawn from the study population of 4, 253,641 this study adopted Taro Yamane formula (1964) as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

N= is the required sample size e = is the level of precision

1= unit constant

$$n = \frac{4,253,641}{1 + 4253,641(0.10)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4,253,641}{4,253,641(0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{4,253,641}{42536}$$

$$n = 100$$

## 1.6 The Historical, Political and Socio-Economic Context of Pastoralist–Farmer Conflicts in Nigeria

According to Azarya (1996), the Fulani pastoralists of West and Central Africa trace much of their current political, religious, and socio-cultural identity from the eighteenth and nineteenth century jihad which sedentarized them within conquered communities. The Fulani are said to originate from Senegambia, before spreading across some 20 states in West Africa and the Sahel, up to Western Sudan and the Central African Republic (Blench 1994; Shehu and Hassan 1995; Blench 2010; McGregor 2014). In Nigeria, they are the mainstay of the meat and milk



industry, accounting for about 90% of cattle herd ownership, which makes up 3.2% of the GDP (Abass 2012; Koster and de Wolff 2012). They rear different species of cattle, such as the Keteku, Muturu, and Kuri, but the Zebu is identified as the most common (Awogbade 1987; Iro 1994). They also supply skins, bones, and horns as complementary products.

The pastoralist system involves young men who tend the herd while the women cook and sell animal products in the market. The elders, in their own stead, are in charge of developing and managing resources at the levels of the community and domestic units (Awogbade 1987; Iro 1994). Despite the development and the centralisation of the state dating back to the colonial era, these informal governing mechanisms have been key to understanding the challenges the pastoralists face with farmers, explaining their social stratification and their seemingly egalitarian nature (Dyson-Hudson 1990; Bradburd 1996; Okello et al. 2014).

From a historical point of view, certain scholars refer to the fact that conflicts resulting from cattle grazing have existed for as long as the practice of agriculture (Blench 2010; Abbass 2012). In the Nigerian context, however, colonization, together with the fall of the Sokoto Caliphate and the introduction of jangali (cattle tax), marginalized the Fulani and dispersed them further towards the South (Azarya 1996; Okello et al. 2014). According to Ofuoku and Isife (2009), the advancement of farming through irrigation and the increased decimation of pasture across the savannah also extended the scope of conflicts, through transhumance, to the coastal zones which were more ecologically viable (Blench 2010). This evolution was complemented with the provision of affordable trypanocides, which provided a coping means for the herders in the tsetse-infested humid regions of southern Nigeria. Thus, the period from May to September, during the rainy season, has been identified as the intense period of clashes between pastoralists and farmers over arable land, when the Fulani return northwards with their cattle as the vegetation begin to appear. These clashes result from the invasion of the arable land by the cattle during this peak season of crop production (Adekunle and Adisa 2010; Abass 2012).

The failure of the government in mediating such conflicts and setting up judicial commissions cannot be underestimated because it pushes communities to take the law into their own hands. After the initiation of the first national livestock development project (NLDP) and the enactment of a grazing law by the Northern Nigeria Legislative Assembly in 1965, the



authorities tried to provide grazing lands in order to make the nomadic Fulani sedentary (Awogbade 1987). In collaboration with organisations such as the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the objective was to enhance productivity and to demarcate 4,125 grazing lands across Nigeria, covering about 4.3 million ha, some of the lands being equipped with boreholes, fences, fire breaks, veterinary services, access roads, and dams (Awogbade 1987; Abass 2012; Koster and de Wolff 2012). The predominant types of ranches were to be individually owned by farmers with large investments; there were few options for cooperatives and a collective management of the herds. Since 2009, grazing routes have also been marked out through Nasarawa, Benue, Plateau, Kastina, Bauchi, Abuja, Sokoto, and Adamawa. According to Abass (2012), however, only 270 of these official grazing lands are functional.

### **1.7 Nigeria and the Grazing Act**

The Land Use Act of 1978 has granted equal rights and opportunities to Nigerians to live in any part of the country un-deterred and regards all citizens as Nigerians and not Natives, unlike the previous Land Tenure Act of 1962 that did not spell this out (Rasak, 2011). According to this law, the Federal government has the capacity to redraw the boundaries between cattle routes, range lands and farmlands accordingly and envisage co-existence of various groups.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Grazing Reserve Act of 1964 was passed for the purpose of accessing grazing lands to the Pastoralists, thereby encouraging sedentarisation and addressing conflict with a plan to improve productivity and social amenities (Awogbade, 1978; Ibrahim, 2012). This, in broader sense was expected to address constraints facing the cattle market and disease control (Ingawa et al., 1989).

However, even though this law was passed, very little implementation was observed. Looking at the impending farmer pastoralist conflict and a reduced cattle production, in which Nigeria imports about 23% of cattle from the neighbouring Sahel countries, the government again enact the National Agricultural Policy of 1988. The law stipulates that a minimum of 10% of the national territory that is 9.8 million acres be allocated to grazing reserves. However, only 2.82 % was acquired out of 313 reserves (CIEL, 2006; Ibrahim, 2012).

The most recent attempt to establish grazing routes and reserves across the 36 states and the FCT was the National Grazing Route and Reserve Commission bill of 2011 (Kumolu, 2014).



On 3rd July 2012, a bill titled ‘The National Grazing Route and Reserve Bill’ was presented to the Nigerian Senate for deliberation (Daily Trust, 2012). The bill however, failed to scale a third reading as the Senators were divided over whether the Federal Government was constitutionally empowered to create grazing reserves and stock routes in any state of the Federation. The inability of the upper house of assembly and the government to promulgate a law establishing grazing reserves raises doubt on the government’s commitment to finding a lasting solution to the conflict. It also raises questions on the government’s commitment to reduce her dependency on oil, and working towards post-oil Nigeria, since her oil reserves may last only up to the year 2053 based on 2012 production rate (World Bank b, 2012). Sedentarisation is another method used by governments to resolve the farmer-pastoralist conflict. However, RECANIGER (2009) shows that pastoral systems are 20% more productive than sedentary animal rearing. The reasons are that sedentarisation require intensive maintenance of field bio-mass to avoid depletion. Of course, even governments in developed countries would find it difficult to provide basic requirements that will encourage pastoralists to settle in designated areas. Several researches have been conducted to determine causes and effects of farmer-pastoralist conflicts. However, limited research has been carried out on the expansion of farmlands and the dwindling pastoral land area, which are the principal causes of conflict. Gefu and Gilles (1990) comparatively studied and analysed changes in land uses meant for grazing and crop production in Nigeria. Their results showed that within a period of 35 years (1951-1986), land primarily meant for livestock grazing diminished by 41.8% while the number of livestock almost doubled. Such rapid change in land uses has set stage for a land use conflict between pastoral land use and other land uses in Nigeria.

### **1.8 Data Presentation and Analysis**

The raw data, which were elicited from field survey, were renewed to meaningful form, for empirical understanding of the result of the findings. It is detached into five parts. The first part consist of the socio-demographic data of the respondents, the second part consist of the nature of the stated question which forms. A totality of one hundred (100) questionnaires was administered to the respondents, out of which only two eighty-nine (89) was returned and answered correctly. Therefore, the analysis is based on the correctly answered questionnaires.



### 1.8.1 Section A: Demographic Data of Respondent

**Table 1.1: Gender of Respondent**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	69	77.5
Female	20	22.5
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

**Table 1.2: Age of Respondent**

Variables (years)	Frequency	Percentage
18 -24	15	16.9
25 -32	19	21.3
33 -40	45	50.6
41 above	10	11.2
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

**Table 1.3: Marital Status of Respondent**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Married	83	93.3
Divorced	5	5.6
Widow/widower	1	1.1
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025



**Table 1.4: Education Status of Respondent**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	7	7.9
Secondary	13	14.6
Tertiary	0	0
Informal	69	77.5
Total	89	100

Source : Field Survey, 2025

**Table 1.5: Occupation Status of Respondent**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Farming	35	39.3
Civil servant	7	7.9
Trading	10	11.2
Student	12	13.5
Others	25	28.1
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

**Table 1.6: Religious status of respondent**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	9	10.1
Islam	75	84.3
Traditional	5	5.6
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

**Table 1.7: Causes of Farmers Pastoralist Conflicts in Benue State**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Indiscriminate bush burning	14	15.7	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Theft of cattle	7	7.9	7 <sup>th</sup>
Indiscriminate defecating on the roads by cattle	13	14.6	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Zero grazing of fallow land	10	11.2	5 <sup>th</sup>
Destruction of crops	25	28.1	1 <sup>st</sup>
Sexual harassment of women by pastoralist	12	13.6	4 <sup>th</sup>
Disregard of traditional authority	8	8.9	6 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Multiple response</b>			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the study, the causes of farmers pastoralist conflicts in Benue state, which reveal that 14.6% represent indiscriminate defecating of cattle around the road, 28.1% is destruction of crops, 7.9% theft of cattle, 11.2% zero grazing of fallow land. 13.6 represent sexual harassment of women by pastoralist, 8.9% disregard of traditional authority, 15.7% of respondent believe that cause of the conflict is indiscriminate bush burning.

**Table 1.8: Farmers and Pastoralist Conflict Affect Food Security in Benue**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	45	50.6
Agree	25	28.1
Undecided	0	0
Strongly disagree	8	8.9
Disagree	11	12.4
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the results above, it revealed that farmers and pastoralist conflict have effect on food security, 50.6% strongly agreed, 28.1% agree with the preposition, 8.9% strongly disagree,



12.4% disagree. It implies during the conflict farmers and pastoralist loss so many valuable items and food reserve for future days, with the advent it led to food insecurity and eventually famine situation.

**Table 1.9: Does farmers and pastoralist conflict have socio-economics effect in Benue State**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	55	61.9
Agree	24	26.9
Undecided	1	1.1
Strongly disagree	5	5.6
Disagree	4	4.5
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table 1.9 above, revealed that farmers and pastoralist conflict have effect on socio –economics, 61.9% strongly agree, 26.9% agree, 1.1%,5.6%,4.5% representing undecided, strongly disagree and disagree. Some of the degree of socio-economic effects include loss of life, erosion, displacement of farmers, and reduction in income and output of farmers.

**Table 1.10: Poor Policy Framework as the Major Cause of Farmers Herdsmen Crises in Benue State**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	65	73
Agree	21	23.6
Undecided	0	0
Strongly disagree	3	3.4
Disagree	0	0
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the above table, it shows that major cause of farmers pastoralist crises is the poor policy frame work, which the respondent with majority 73% strongly agreed with the statement,



23.6% agree, 3.4% strongly disagree.

**Table 1.11: Development of grazing reserves for farmers herdsmen reduces crises in Benue State**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	71	79.8
Agree	12	13.4
Undecided	0	0
Strongly disagree	3	3.4
Disagree	3	3.4
Total	89	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 1.11 above, it revealed that development of grazing reserve for farmer's pastoralist crisis, 79.8% strongly agree, 13.4 agree with the proposition, while 3.4 % strongly disagree and disagree. This implies that grazing reserve will help to reduce crisis in Benue state.

**Table 1.12: Crisis's Management Mechanism Exacerbate Farmers Herdsmen crisis in Benue State**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	48	53.9
Agree	24	26.9
Undecided	4	4.5
Strongly disagree	11	12.5
Disagree	2	2.2
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the table 1.12, the result revealed that crisis management mechanism exacerbates herdsmen crisis, with 53.9% strongly agree, 24.9% agree and 4.5%, 12.5%, 2.2% representing undecided, strongly disagree and agree respectively.



**Table 1.13: Inclusion of stakeholders from policy formulation help to curb crisis**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	35	39.3
Agree	24	26.9
Undecided	0	0
Strongly disagree	19	21.3
Disagree	11	12.4
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table above revealed that 39.3% strongly agree, 26.9% agree, 21.3% strongly disagree and 12.4% disagree, that inclusion of stakeholders from policy formulation help to curb crisis.

**Table 1.14: Grazing reserves reduces challenge militating against efforts to curb crisis**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	54	60.7
Agree	15	16.9
Undecided	0	0
Strongly disagree	5	5.5
Disagree	15	16.9
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The result from table 1.14, revealed 60.7% strongly agree that grazing reserve help to curb crisis, 16.9% agree, 5.5 % strongly disagree, 16.9% disagree which implies that grazing reserving will help go a long way to curb the crisis.



**Table 1.15: Policy capacity another challenge militating against effort to curb crisis**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	42	47.2
Agree	10	11.3
Undecided	0	0
Stongly disagree	16	17.9
Disagree	21	23.6
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the field study, and the data presented above , it shows 47.2% believe that policy capacity can curb crisis, 11.3% agree,17.9%,23.6% of the respondent strongly disagree and disagree. This implies good policy will help to curb the farmers pastoralist conflict in the study area.

**Table 1.16: Solution to farmers' herdsmen crisis**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Grazing reserve	55	61.8
Equal inclusion of farmers pastoralist in policy framework	12	13.5
Law on grazing	22	24.7
Total	89	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the study, it revealed that solutions to farmers pastoralist conflict in the area can be solved through building of grazing reserve represent 61.8%, law on grazing 24.7% which means policy or rules on grazing lands should be enacted ,13.5% represent equal inclusion of farmers pastoralist in policy framework, which help in mediation between both aggrieved party.

## 1.9 Summary of Research Findings

1. Although there are frequent clashes between farmers and herdsmen in Benue State, the



state government has yet to come out with anti-open a grazing law.

2. It has been observed that the violent disposition of Fulani herdsmen has given rise to anti-Fulani comments in some parts of the country and has equally continued to instill hatred against them (Idowu, 2017). Some persons have cited a Fulani expansionist agenda as being behind these attacks. Moreso, a twitter hashtag to that effect #MAFO “Movement Against Fulani Occupation” has been launched and there have been allegations of possible government collusion in this perceived agenda (Nwosu, 2017).

3. To guarantee security of life and property (of both herdsmen and farmers) for a sustained peace and development the people are being mobilized to be security conscious to provide intelligence report to the police to forestall attacks by herdsmen and their mercenaries.

4. Even though the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen cannot be directly said to have strong political influence within Benue State, it seems they are fighting to gain some socio-political influence in a state that is predominantly Christian.

### **1.10 Conclusion and Recommendation**

Over some time insecurity is not new to Nigerians because this emanate from all quarters of the country. The search for State power motivated the rise of military coups, secessionist civil war, and insurgency in the likes of Niger-Delta militants and Boko Haram were great insecurity sources and have all been used as instruments to getting State power. These forceful approaches to getting power made life insecure for Nigerians. Today the most serious version of insecurity challenge facing Nigeria is disguised herdsmen terrorism in the robe of farmers-herdsmen conflicts. It is disguised because they claim they are fighting farmers but in reality people who are not famers are put in a state of fear, are attacked, which has led to destruction of lives, towns and villages.

Although there are frequent clashes between farmers and herdsmen in Bneue State, the state government has yet to come out with anti-open a grazing law. The grazing reserves don't have amenities like hospitals, veterinary clinics, and schools for the Fulani children, security outpost, cattle routes, earth dam and boreholes and market. Where these are available herdsmen would be encouraged to be in game reserves. The findings in this study also run contrary to the



conventional view that the Nigerian breed of cattle is not suitable for ranching, because of the issue of insufficient rain to provide adequate feed and water for the animals. From the field study, and the data presented above, it shows 47.2% believe that policy capacity can curb crisis, 11.3% agree, 17.9%, 23.6% of the respondent strongly disagree and disagree. This implies good policy will help to curb the farmers pastoralist conflict in the study area. The major effect of this is that meanwhile, to guarantee security of life and property (of both herdsmen and farmers) for a sustained peace and development the people are being mobilized.

This study came up with the following recommendation:

1. Accountability should be given its proper place in Nigeria.
2. The government should make adequate arrangement for provision of necessary infrastructure in the already gazetted grazing reserve most especially veterinary clinics and make vaccine available and affordable for them.
3. Grazing reserves should be properly gazetted and customary owners paid adequate compensation to avoid the taking over of land by force.
4. While States should be seen clearly and specifically make budgetary provisions for ranch development, International agencies should come to the aids of States and Federal Governments by partnering to facilitate the provision of amenities like fencing materials for farmland and ranches. The facilities include electricity hospitals, veterinary clinics, schools, security outpost, cattle routes, earth dam, boreholes and markets in and for neighborhood ranches and grazing reserves. These international best practices would encourage herdsmen and farmers to use the grazing reserves and ranches.
5. Both herdsmen and farmers should stop making hate speeches because hate speeches encourage anger and destroys unity. And those making hate speeches should be brought to book.
6. The herdsmen and famers should bear in mind that actions that lead to distrust is bad and should be abandoned. Therefore plans for reprisal violent attacks on the whole town and villages in the case of two persons should be discouraged. And disarmament should not only be on one side but from both sides.



7. Finally, the issue of increasing the number of security service to meet the internal security facing Nigeria because the army is over stretched.

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