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## Agricultural Productivity, Output and Insecurity in Nigeria: A Literature Review Approach

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### Abstract

The paper investigated the effect of insecurity on Agricultural productivity and output in Nigeria and identify the casual factors. This paper utilized a systematic literature review approach and critical findings identified such as weak infrastructure and institutional inefficiencies, low internal security expenditure, terrorism, banditry and high unemployment. The paper recommended that government increases investment in the real sectors of agriculture and manufacturing towards the creation of employment to absorb the growing population of unemployed active youth to help reduce their involvement in various crimes and social vices. The paper further suggested that in order to protect the country's internal and external borders from terrorist attacks and to boost both local and international direct investment in Nigeria's agriculture sector, the military and paramilitary sectors should be strengthened.

**Keywords:** Agricultural Outputs, Insecurity, Nigeria Economy and Growth.

### Introduction

Despite the growing significance of Nigeria's dependence on oil, its economy remains predominantly rural. Agriculture positively impacts on Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), total exports, and employment of the bulk of the workforce. Owoeye (2023) paper on Agricultural Finance in Nigeria argued that Agriculture is responsible for around 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides employment possibilities, both formal and informal, to over 65% of Nigeria's population of 250 million inhabitants. Between 1960 and 2025, the average productivity of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in agricultural sector was considered very low when taken into accounts the vast land and agricultural resources available. Given the level of performance, it is expected that the government would prioritise the agricultural sector and aggressively support programmes, particularly those pertaining to finance and ensuring farmers' safety and security. According to Jaja (2001), some Nigerians are unable to meet their fundamental needs, including clothing, food, and shelter due to lack of security. It is impossible to advance socioeconomically in a setting where property and human safety are not guaranteed.

The absence of safeguards against criminal activity and the lack of protection from bodily injury are referred to as insecurity (Beland, 2005). To put it simply, insecurity is the inability to protect oneself against emotional distress. An insecure individual lacks the independence to reach their full potential and is socially excluded. Furthermore, dread never goes away.

Achumba et al (2013) argued that the impact of insecurity hindered agricultural productivity in Nigeria. Nigeria has seen several crises and security issues over the past 20 years, especially in rural areas where agriculture is the most common occupation. Between 2009 and 2012, these issues manifested as kidnappings in many parts of Nigeria, particularly in the Southeast. Boko Haram attacks in the Northeast, conflicts between farmers and herdsmen in the North Central, Middle Belt, and South East regions, communal conflicts, the presence of unidentified armed individuals in the South East, insurgencies in the Niger Delta, ritualistic murders, politically motivated killings, religious extremism, explosions in oil pipelines, excessive use of force by security services, peaceful protests that descended into violence,

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and other types of civil unrest all significantly increased during this time. Around 60% of these crises happened in rural areas with a predominant focus on agriculture. Owoye (2024) paper on rural micro-entrepreneurs' experiences coping with the pandemic in Nigeria, corroborated the argument above as rural farmers experienced combination of limited travel, and varying degrees of community lockdown and displacements, quarantine which reduced their productivity. The government has thus raised the amount of money allotted to security in its budget. Many farmers have fled their homes in order to protect their survival, but some especially young people have died. A significant portion of farmland has been seriously damaged by the ongoing conflict between farmers and Fulani cattle herders. Due to worries about instability, several farmers who first entered the agricultural sector to ensure food security and generate employment opportunities are now reconsidering their involvement in commercial farming. There has been a decline in agricultural output, which has raised food costs and made it more difficult to transport food to cities. Given the situation, a thorough study of how insecurity affects Nigerian agricultural output is essential.

### Research Methodology

A systematic literature review (SLR) was used in this paper. Owoye (2023) paper on consumption, housing market and demand for mortgage finance argued that the SLR identifies, selects, and assesses research that addresses a given topic. The author identified the key sources of literature for each of the study subjects using SLR. The publications were chosen based on their citation count in Google Scholar, Scopus, and the journal's impact factor.

### Literature Review and Discussions

Agriculture remains a critical sector in Nigeria, contributing significantly to employment, food security, and economic development. Despite its importance, the sector continues to face persistent challenges related to low productivity, declining output, and increasing insecurity. The literature identifies structural, institutional, environmental, and security-related factors as key constraints limiting agricultural performance in Nigeria. One of the most widely documented problems is low agricultural productivity, largely driven by subsistence farming practices, limited mechanisation, and inadequate access to modern inputs such as improved seeds, fertilisers, and irrigation systems. Studies such Afuwape (2014) and Owoye (2023) show that nearly 70% of Nigerian farmers operate at subsistence level, making the sector highly vulnerable to shocks and limiting its capacity for large-scale output growth. Additionally, poor access to credit and financial services constrains farmers' ability to invest in productivity-enhancing technologies, reinforcing a cycle of low output and rural poverty. The widespread insecurity in the Nigeria food basket has made the situation worse.

Another critical constraint identified in the literature is weak infrastructure and institutional inefficiencies. Poor rural road networks, inadequate storage facilities, and inefficient market systems increase post-harvest losses and reduce farmers' incomes. These structural deficiencies limit market integration and discourage private investment in agriculture. Furthermore, policy inconsistencies and weak implementation of agricultural programmes have

undermined long-term sectoral development. The poor rural road networks have prevented rescue efforts to be effective when there are events of kidnappings and displacement which remained widespread (Hoffmann, 2026).

Closely linked to these challenges is the issue of climate change and environmental degradation, which has further exacerbated productivity constraints. Evidence suggests that climate variability manifested through droughts, flooding, and changing rainfall patterns has negatively affected crop yields and livestock production in Nigeria. Globally, climate change has been shown to significantly reduce agricultural productivity, particularly in warmer regions such as Africa. In Nigeria, poor irrigation systems and heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture amplify the impact of these environmental shocks. This contributed to the migration of Fulani cattle herders moving southwards which is the root cause of the farmers-headers conflicts.

More recently, insecurity has emerged as a major and growing threat to agricultural productivity and output. The literature consistently highlights how conflicts such as Boko Haram insurgency, farmer-herder clashes, banditry, and kidnappings have disrupted farming activities across many regions of Nigeria (Eneji et al 2019). Insecurity restricts access to farmland, displaces rural populations, and destroys agricultural infrastructure, thereby reducing both crop and livestock production. Studies show that increased insecurity has significant negative effects on agricultural output in both the short and long run, often discouraging domestic and foreign investment in the sector. The impact of insecurity extends beyond production to affect food security and rural livelihoods. Displacement of farmers and abandonment of farmland have led to reduced food supply, rising food prices, and increased hunger levels. Evidence from Hoffmann (2026) indicated that millions of Nigerians are experiencing acute food shortages due to insecurity and rising production costs, highlighting the strong linkage between conflict and food insecurity. Moreover, insecurity disrupts agricultural supply chains, limiting the movement of goods from rural to urban areas and further constraining output distribution.

Another important issue identified in the literature is the interrelationship between agricultural productivity and food security. Studies demonstrate that improvements in agricultural productivity significantly enhance household food security by increasing food availability and reducing reliance on less nutritious alternatives. However, the persistence of low productivity and rising insecurity continues to undermine these gains, leading to a paradox where a country with significant agricultural potential remains food insecure.

In addition, population growth and urbanisation pressures have intensified demand for food without a corresponding increase in agricultural output. This imbalance contributes to food price inflation and increased dependence on food imports, further exposing the economy to external shocks. The literature also points to limited adoption of agricultural technology and low human capital development among farmers as additional barriers to productivity improvement. In conclusion, the literature reveals that agricultural productivity, output, and insecurity in Nigeria are deeply interconnected. Low productivity is driven by structural inefficiencies, environmental challenges, and limited technological adoption, while insecurity exacerbates these

problems by disrupting production and supply chains. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including improved security, investment in infrastructure, access to finance, adoption of modern agricultural technologies, and consistent policy implementation. Without these interventions, Nigeria's agricultural sector will continue to underperform despite its vast potential.

### Recommendations

1. Increasing funding for the security industry, the government should prioritise internal security architecture.
2. In order to provide jobs for the rising number of jobless young people and lessen their engagement in different crimes and social vices, the government should spend more in the actual industries of manufacturing and agriculture.
3. The government should implement specific policies and initiatives to support rural people affected by insecurity, such as making agricultural inputs, extension services, and market facilities more accessible, building resilience, and improving livelihoods.
4. The creation of systems for tracking and assessing the effectiveness of agricultural and security policies across time, allowing decision-makers to promptly modify and improve them in response to changing conditions and immediate input.

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