

Effects of Prevalent Insecurity on Agricultural Livelihood of Crop Farmers in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Recent instances of insecurity, followed by frequent lockdowns in Southeast Nigeria, have deterred agricultural production, processing, and marketing. The overall purpose of this study was to determine the effects of insecurity on crop farmers' agricultural livelihoods in Enugu State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to: describe socioeconomic characteristics of respondents, ascertain the types of insecurities prevalent in Enugu state, examine the effects of insecurities on agricultural livelihood and crop farmers, identify the challenges faced by farmers in efforts to reduce insecurities, and ascertain strategies employed to overcome these challenges of insecurity. A multistage sampling procedure, including purposive and random sampling techniques, was used to select 320 respondents. Data was collected through structural interviews. Results revealed that most respondents (57.5%) were female, whereas 42.5% were male. The mean age of the crop farmers was 41.54. About (34%) of the crop farmers affected by insecurity were aged 40-49, followed by those within the age range of 30-39 years (32.7%) and 10.3% were aged less than 30 years. The most common types of insecurity among crop farmers were crop vandalism, water insecurity, environmental degradation, and disputes over land ownership or boundaries. Effects of insecurity on the agricultural livelihood of crop farmers were food scarcity ($\bar{x}=3.71$), increased post-harvest losses ($\bar{x}=3.56$), threat to personal safety ($\bar{x}=3.26$) among others. Major challenges faced by farmers in their effort to reduce insecurity include pest and disease outbreaks ($\bar{x}=3.72$), poor access to quality seeds, among others. Strategies suggested to overcome insecurity include promoting community development ($\bar{x}=2.900$), providing access to education and training and improved seeds and fertilizer among others. The study concluded that insecurity often discourages investment in modern farming techniques, machinery, and infrastructure, hindering agricultural productivity and leaving crop farmers trapped in a cycle of subsistence farming with limited room for growth. The study also revealed that the government, community, and relevant stakeholders should collaborate to implement comprehensive security measures, foster the social system, promote sustainable agriculture, and provide farmers with necessities such as funds, credit, facilities, and incentives to cushion and overcome the shock of insecurity.

Keywords: Agriculture; Insecurity; Farmers.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The persistent insecurity in various regions across the world has negatively impacted the agricultural livelihoods of crop farmers, leading to a significant increase in hunger and poverty. Recently, farmers have been kidnapped by gunmen, bandits, nonstop lockdown and armed Fulani herdsmen. Kidnapping has become so rampant to the extent that farmers must pay some amount to bandits to avoid being attacked. Despite this, agriculture remains a crucial component of many people's livelihoods worldwide. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the agricultural sector

employs more than one-third of the world's population (FAO, 2021). Agricultural livelihoods provide food and income for millions of households, particularly in developing countries. However, agricultural livelihoods are also vulnerable to the effects of conflicts and other crises, which can significantly affect food security and increase the likelihood of insecurity. Food security is a major concern for countries worldwide. In fact, it is among the two prominent goals of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely, ensuring food security for all countries by 2030 (Nwozo et al., 2019). Henry et al. (2020) view food security as a situation in which everyone has physical, social, and economic access to

sufficient food to meet their dietary needs and produce, and to remain healthy. When these conditions are non-existent or inadequate, people are food insecure. Food security worldwide can only be achieved when farmers have adequate security to carry out their farming activities. A situation in which farmers can no longer access their farmland poses a major challenge to achieving global food security. By 2020, insecurity was recognized as the main driver of food crisis for over 100 million people globally (Food Security Information Network, 2021). In addition, the report highlights that insecurity has been responsible for driving 80% of acute food crises over the past decade (FAO, 2020). The 2021 global report on food crises stated that in 2020, almost 100 million people facing serious hunger lived in areas severely affected by insecurity, and the number has continued to increase (GRC, 2021). Conflict and other major drivers of food insecurity are slowing progress toward achieving zero hunger, even as injustices remain evident. Countries in the Global South are struggling to make substantial progress in sustainable development, especially in those prone to conflict, civil war, and political instability. It is estimated that about 381.4 million of the 650.3 million chronically undernourished people in 2019 are from countries plagued by conflict, usually aggravated by climate-related shocks (FAO, 2021). A major reason for hunger and reduced food production in developing countries is conflict. According to a recent report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), around 74 million people are affected by acute hunger in conflict zones, which is more than two-thirds of the global total. (FAO, 2020). In the world today, enough food is produced to feed everyone; however, millions of people remain hungry (United Nations, 2021). The combined effect of this violence is to disrupt activities necessary for food production, with serious implications for food security. The underlying causes of food insecurity vary, ranging from conflict, climatic conditions, and a poor agricultural sector. Africa shows higher levels of food insecurity than other parts of the world (FAO, 2020). Across Africa, 250 million people are experiencing a hunger crisis, nearly 20% of the population (Reid, 2021). One effect of insecurity on agricultural livelihoods in Africa is the displacement of people from their homes, which disrupts their access to food and agricultural resources (FAO, 2021). For instance, in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, the ongoing conflict has led to the displacement of more than two million people, disrupting their access to food and agricultural livelihoods (OCHA, 2021).

In Nigeria, the constant suspected herder attacks, banditry, kidnapping, and other attacks in the farmlands witnessed across the nation reflect farming insecurity in the modern-day farming ecosystem. This situation entails a critical problem for the farming population and generally affects the country's food production. The direct implication of national insecurity for food production was captured by Ilo et al. (2019), who recognised that it undermines farming capacity and heightens the likelihood of galloping food prices, all of which exacerbate poverty and hunger and signal a likely nationwide food crisis. The present-day financial challenges in the country have forced farmers in abandoned farmlands to struggle to make ends meet. Regrettably, efforts

to alleviate the economic burden through agriculture appear ineffective due to rising insecurity in farmland (Omodero, 2021). It is estimated that more than 10,000 people lost their lives in the past decade from the violence unleashed by Fulani herders on farming communities. Of this figure, more than 6,000 persons were casualties in the past two years (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2018; Ilo et al., 2019). As the Fulani herders were unleashing violence across the country, so was the Boko Haram sect terrorizing the northeastern geopolitical zone. The record of fatalities linked to Boko Haram conflicts in 2018 showed a death toll of 2,016 persons (Campbell, 2018; Ilo et al, 2019). The crisis has since rocked the nation due to the government's mismanagement of resources and office. Nigeria today is experiencing slow economic growth and high levels of insecurity (Statista Research Department, 2021). In 2017, Nigeria was one of the countries struck by the four famines due to environmental degradation in combination with vulnerability because of the Boko Haram conflict, which led to severe food insecurity Metropolitan Area Network (MAN,2020). Nigeria remains affected by conflict with weak institutions. There has been insufficient investment in the agricultural sector, resulting in low food production, according to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS, 2019). With a large, developing economy and significant potential to increase food production nationwide, several factors have made adequate food availability unattainable. The Nigerian state has experienced and is still experiencing insecurity of immense proportions amongst numerous ethnic and religious communities across its states. Nwakanma and Boroh (2019) attest that Nigerian history is saddled with different aspects of conflict, stretching from religious to sectional violence, and to the more recent surging clashes between different livelihood groups, particularly between stationary farmers and nomadic herdsman across the country. According to Odalonu (2020), the combination of environmental degradation and violence (related to factors such as climate change, high population growth, the Boko Haram insurgency, cattle rustling etc.) has resulted in recurrent drought in the Sahel regions and has pushed herders from North southwards towards the Guinea Savannah of the tropical rain forest in search of pasture and water resulting in competition for grazing routes with farmers. (Adesina & Ogundiran, 2021). During their journey and search, the herders frequently trespass on farmlands owned by locals in their host communities, causing havoc and destroying crops and valuables in their wake. Nwakanma and Boroh (2019) and Nwosu (2017) posit that the farmers are not only overpowered and injured, but herders use the opportunities to rape, steal, raze houses and kill innocent members of the communities they pass through and in very extreme cases, make them vacate their villages, thereby rendering them internally displaced persons (IDPs). Worse still, these are done without the least provocations only that the indigenes questioned the rationale of trespasses and forceful land acquisitions (Ilo et al, 2019). Besides the Boko Haram group, insecurity in Nigeria has been aggravated by the criminal activities of sundry groups. The group with the most devastating impact is the Fulani herders, whose murderous campaigns have targeted farming communities, with no challenge from the state (Amnesty International, 2018; Ilo et

al, 2019). The picture of Nigeria's food and nutritional insecurity has been worsening. According to FAO et al (2019), between 2004 and 2006, the total number of undernourished Nigerians was 9.1 million. This number increased to 25.6 million people or 281.32 per cent in the period between 2016 and 2018 due to Insecurity and the persistence of violent attacks on farmers and farming societies. Several farmers in rural settlements have doubts about visiting their farmlands, mainly due to concerns about kidnapping or unwarranted attacks by herders (Abdulkareem, 2021).

In Enugu State attack on farmers and the destruction of farmlands have made many farmers abandon their farms for fear of being maimed or killed by the rampaging herdsmen. There is no doubt that the killing of farmers and destruction of farms will disrupt farming activities in Enugu, which will invariably lead to a shortage of food (FAO, 2020). The group with the most devastating impact is the Fulani herders, whose murderous campaigns have targeted farming communities, with no challenge from the state (Amnesty International, 2018; Ilo et al, 2019). The effects of insecurity on agricultural livelihoods and crop farmers in Enugu State are multi-dimensional, ranging from reduced agricultural productivity, increased food prices, displacement of farmers, and destruction of farmlands, to loss of livelihoods and social dislocation (Cramer, De Janvry, and Sadoulet, 2019). One of the key effects of insecurity on crop farmers and agricultural livelihoods in Enugu State is a reduction in agricultural productivity. Farmers, who are the primary producers of food, are often affected by insecurity, making it difficult for them to carry out their farming activities effectively. This often results in reduced yields and production, which ultimately affects food availability and access. According to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2019), insecurity can cause up to 50% reduction in agricultural productivity, leading to food shortages and malnutrition. Another effect of insecurity on crop farmers and agricultural livelihoods in Enugu State is the rise in food prices. According to a report by the World Food Programme (WFP, 2021), disruptions to food production and supply chains due to insecurity often lead to scarcity and hoarding, which in turn cause food prices to skyrocket. This makes it difficult for vulnerable households to access food, leading to food insecurity and hunger. According to a report by the World Food Programme (WFP, 2020), food prices in conflict-affected areas can be up to 200% higher than in stable areas, making it difficult for vulnerable households to access food crops. The breakdown of social structures and relationships due to insecurity often leads to social dislocation and trauma. This affects individuals' and households' capacity to cope with food insecurity and related challenges. According to a study by Fenta and Alemu (2020), psychological insecurity can increase vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition in affected communities.

Importantly, the dimension and magnitude of this insecurity have assumed an increasing regularity, and the killings have left researchers to wonder how this crisis can be solved. The fundamental issue in this crisis is the lack of government planning productive activities that guarantee

long-term investment in the country (Enoma, 2019). There is now a limited available of labour for farming activities as farmers are now afraid of going to their farmlands because of the unusual occurrence of kidnapping in a state like Enugu. According to the report by Olagunju, Oke, Babatunde, and Ajiboye (2020), insecurity has led to an increase in food prices in Nigeria, contributing to agricultural food loss. In the light of all these pressures and challenges, many crop farmers were forced to abandon their lands and relocate to neighbouring countries, which has drastically reduced food production and skyrocketed food prices. According to a recent study conducted by Odo and Nwokedi (2019), found that the major sources of insecurity in the state are lockdown, cultism, communal clashes, and kidnapping. This further revealed that these insecurities have led to the loss of lives, displacement, and damage to crop farmers' property. This challenge has led to decreased agricultural productivity, resource scarcity, and made it difficult for farmers to access inputs, finance, and the market. These findings above bring up the major reasons for carrying out this research study to determine the impact of insecurity on agricultural food loss; proffer positive recommendations that will boost agricultural productivity and reduce the level of insecurities and conflict insecurity providing employment and income for a large number of people, also to investigate the role of conflict resolution, peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts in promoting food security and agricultural livelihood, to identify practical solutions that can be implemented at the local, national, and international levels to promote food security and agricultural livelihoods in conflict-affected regions.

Consequently, given these facts, the study raises the following questions: What are the main sources of insecurity and conflict, and how do they affect agricultural livelihoods in the region? How do different types of insecurity (e.g. political, ethnic, criminal) affect agricultural production in Enugu State? What are the best practices and strategies that can be implemented to mitigate the negative impacts of insecurity on agricultural livelihoods in conflict-affected regions? What coping strategies do farmers and rural communities in Enugu State use to deal with insecurity, and how effective are these strategies? The ongoing conflict has disrupted farming activities, reduced agricultural productivity, and destroyed critical infrastructure. These factors have resulted in a decrease in food availability. This study is important because it will help to understand the complex interplay between conflict and food systems. In areas affected by conflict, food security is often compromised due to disrupted agricultural production, trade and marketing systems, and food distribution networks. Hence, the general purpose of the study was to identify the effects of insecurity on the agricultural livelihoods of crop farmers in Enugu State. The specific objectives include: describing the socioeconomic characteristics of respondents; ascertaining the prevalence of insecurity in Enugu State; examining the effects of insecurity on agricultural livelihoods and crop farmers; identifying the challenges farmers face in efforts to reduce insecurity; and ascertaining the strategies employed to overcome these challenges.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. The state is located at 6°30' North of the equator and 7°30' East of the equator, in the southeastern part of Nigeria, bounded by Abia and Imo to the south, Ebonyi to the east, Benue to the north-east, Kogi to the north-west, and Anambra State to the west. It covers an area of 7,161 km² and has year-round good climatic conditions. Enugu state is characterized by two distinct seasons: the dry season, which lasts from November to March with February being the hottest month with about 87.16°F, and the raining season, which lasts from April to September, with average annual rainfall of about 2,000 millimetres. The state is in the humid tropical rainforest zone, and its temperature is characteristic of a tropical climate with a mean daily temperature of about 26.7 °C. The area has a favourable soil for agricultural activities. The State has 17 Local Government Areas, as follows: Aninri, Enugu East, Enugu North, Enugu South, Enugu West, Igbo-Etiti, Igbo-Ukwu, Isi-Uzo, Nkanu East, Nkanu West, Nsukka, Oji River, Udenu, Udi, and Uzo-Uwani. The state is constituted with farmers, skilled and unskilled workers and businessmen. Thus, most of their inhabitants are either full-time or part-time farmers. The main food crops grown include yams, cassava, rice, maize, and pepper, while the cash crops include oil palm, banana, and various fruits (Uchegbu & Maduka, 2018).

The population of this study comprised all crop farmers in Enugu State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select respondents. In the first stage, 4 local government areas, namely Igbo Etiti and Nsukka, were randomly selected from the 17 local government areas in the area using simple random sampling. In the second stage, 2 town communities were purposely selected because of persistent insecurity and the availability of large crop farmers in each local government. In stage three, two village communities were purposely selected from each community, making a total of 4 town communities, under which 2 villages were selected from each town community, making 8 villages. At the final stage, 40 farmers were selected from each village community, making a total of 320 farmers who served as the sample for the population.

Data for this study was collected through a structured interview divided into five sections aligning with the study's objectives. Objective one involved asking respondents about their socioeconomic characteristics, such as age, sex, marital status, and educational level. Objective two assessed the types of insecurity in Enugu State by asking respondents to indicate whether specific types were dominant in their region, using yes (1) or no (2) responses. These types may include communal conflict, harder/farmer clashes, or political conflict. Objective three evaluated how these insecurity effects impact agricultural livelihoods by using a four-point Likert scale: very great extent (4), great extent (3), little extent (2), and no extent (1). The scores were summed and divided by 4 to produce a mean of 2.5. Variables with a mean of 2.5 or higher were considered major effects, and those below 2.5 minor effects. Objective four identified challenges faced by crop farmers in mitigating insecurity, using the

same four-point scale, with scores summed and divided by 4; the 2.5 cutoff determined whether a challenge was major or minor. Objective five explored strategies to overcome these challenges, using a three-point Likert scale: very effective (3), effective (2), and not effective (1). The scores were summed and divided by 3 to produce a mean of 2, with variables scoring 2 or higher considered major strategies. Data were analyzed with percentages, means, and standard deviations, using SPSS software.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Crop Farmers

Certain socio-economic characteristics of the respondent were identified, such as sex, age, marital status, household size, farming experience, education level, years in school, primary and secondary occupations, social organization membership and type, monthly household members, farm labor sources, and estimated farmland size.

➤ Sex

Table 1 indicates that both genders are actively involved in crop farming, with women making up 57.5% of respondents and men 42.5%. This highlights women's predominant role in crop production within the study area. This trend is typical in many rural communities, where cultural norms, economic duties, and household labor arrangements often place women at the core of agricultural work. Additionally, male migration to cities in search of jobs often leaves women primarily responsible for farming and household food production. Women's involvement in crop farming enhances global research and rural food security (FAO, 2021). Social norms and economic needs influence women's farming, especially in regions reliant on agriculture (Doss et al., 2018). The high number of female farmers shows gender trends in agricultural labor.

➤ Age

Table 1 indicates that the majority of crop farmers affected by insecurity are between 40 and 49 years old, accounting for 34% of respondents. This is followed by farmers aged 30 to 39 at 32.7%, while those under 30 constitute only 10.3%. The smallest proportions are among farmers aged 50 to 59 and those below 30. The average age of 41.54 years suggests that most respondents are in their most productive and physically active years.

Most farmers remain energetic and able to manage crop production despite insecurity. Younger and middle-aged farmers tend to be more flexible, innovative, and open to new methods, supporting findings from Hussaini et al. (2020) that these farmers are more resilient and productive due to greater energy and a greater willingness to adapt. This age group's dominance probably boosts their ability to manage insecurity-related challenges.

➤ Marital Status

Table 1 indicates that most respondents were married, representing 77.5% of the sample. Widowed farmers constituted 12.5%, while 8.8% were single and 1.3% divorced. This suggests that most crop farmers impacted by

insecurity in the area are married. Typically, married farmers bear greater responsibility for supporting their families, which could explain their active engagement in crop farming as their main livelihood. Marriage boosts farmers' resilience amid insecurity by providing emotional, financial, and physical support from spouses, helping them cope with agricultural disruptions. Household social support improves decision-making, labor, and adaptive strategies during stress (Badstue et al., 2020). The high number of married respondents indicates that household support networks are vital in coping with insecurity.

➤ *Household Size*

Data in Table 1 show that a greater proportion of respondents (65.6%) had a household size of 5-8 members, 18.9% had more than 8 members, and 16.3% had fewer than 5 members. This implies that the respondents had large families, which enables division of labour among family members, allowing for more efficient utilisation of available resources and labour-intensive tasks. Additionally, a larger household size can foster resilience by pooling resources, knowledge, and skills, making it easier to cope with external shocks. This is supported by findings from Mekonnen et al. (2020), which reveal that households with larger family sizes were more likely to adopt diversified livelihood strategies, mitigating the adverse effects of insecurity on agricultural production.

➤ *Years of Farming Experience*

Table 1 shows that 52.5% of respondents have 10-20 years of farming experience. An additional 25.2% have 21 to 30 years, 15.1% have over 30 years, and 7.6% have 31 to 40 years. The average farming experience is 18.25 years, indicating that most farmers have devoted a large part of their lives to agriculture.

Greater agricultural experience strengthens farmers' ability to handle challenges, adopt innovations, and develop coping strategies. Ugah (2022) notes that longer tenure in a profession improves skills, adaptability, and willingness to try new practices. Experienced farmers manage risks more effectively, adjust their methods, and employ strategies to mitigate threats during periods of insecurity. Research shows that farming experience enhances decision-making and resilience to shocks such as conflict, climate change, and market fluctuations (FAO, 2021). Overall, the findings indicate that farming experience significantly influences how farmers respond to insecurity and helps sustain their livelihoods.

➤ *Level of Education*

Table 1 data show that 37.5% of respondents completed secondary school, 23.8% primary, 12.5% attempted secondary, 10.0% tertiary, 6.2% primary, and 10.0% no formal schooling. Most crop farmers have some education, aiding understanding of agricultural info, adopting innovations, and interacting with extension agents. Education boosts awareness, decision-making, and response to agricultural and security challenges in rural areas, aligning with FAO's and World Bank reports on the benefits of formal education for farmers' adoption of technologies,

participation in programs, and adaptation to changing conditions. Thus, the higher education level may enhance their understanding of insecurity issues and willingness to implement strategies to mitigate insecurity's impact on farming.

➤ *Number of Years Spent in School*

Table 1 indicates that 40.1% of respondents completed between 11 and 15 years of formal education, while 32.7% attended school for 5 to 10 years. Additionally, 8.8% spent 1 to 4 years in school, another 8.8% had over 15 years of education, and 10.0% had no formal schooling.

The findings show many crop farmers have moderate to high formal education, enabling them to understand agricultural info, adopt better methods, and grasp insecurity's impact on output and livelihoods. Higher education generally correlates with smarter decisions, better info access, and greater adaptability. The finding aligns with the FAO's view that education improves farmers' ability to adopt innovations, manage risks, and increase productivity (FAO, 2022). Likewise, the World Bank highlighted that formal education boosts rural households' resilience by improving information access, encouraging technology use, and expanding livelihood options (World Bank, 2021). Hence, respondents' high education level may boost awareness of insecurity issues and their readiness to adopt strategies to reduce farming impacts.

➤ *Monthly Household Income*

Table 1 indicates that 38.9% of respondents earn between ₦21,000 and ₦30,000 monthly, while 26.3% earn between ₦31,000 and ₦40,000. Additionally, 13.8% make between ₦41,000 and ₦50,000, and only 6.3% earn above ₦60,000 per month. The average monthly income for respondents is ₦36,162.5, reflecting a generally low income level among crop farmers.

The finding indicates insecurity harms farmers' livelihoods by reducing income and economic stability. It disrupts farming, limits land access, decreases productivity, and restricts market access, lowering household income. This makes it harder for farmers to meet basic needs like food, healthcare, housing, education, and investments, increasing the risk of poverty and food insecurity. This finding supports the FAO report showing conflict hampers rural income and livelihoods in developing nations (FAO, 2023). It also agrees with the World Bank, noting that insecurity and shocks lower rural earnings, reduce productivity, and worsen living standards for smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2022). Low household income discourages farmers from investing in advanced technologies, as limited resources focus on immediate needs rather than long-term improvements.

➤ *Source of Farm Labour*

Table 1 indicates that a larger share of respondents (61.3%) used hired labour for their farming tasks, whereas 38.8% mainly relied on family members. This implies that numerous farmers supplement household labour with hired workers to fulfill the labor demands of agricultural activities,

particularly during key stages like land preparation, planting, and harvesting. Dependence on hired labor relates to farm size, household labor shortages, and the need for quick farm activities to increase productivity. In many rural areas, relying only on family labor isn't enough, so farmers hire external workers. The FAO states labor is a crucial input in smallholder farming, particularly where mechanization is limited (FAO, 2021). The finding aligns with the ILO (2020), which reports that rural households often use both family and hired labour to sustain productivity and handle rising demands. However, reliance on hired labour can increase costs, especially during insecurity and economic instability when labour is scarce.

➤ *Size of farmland*

Table 1 reveals that the majority of respondents (61.6%) cultivated less than 0.5 hectares, while 33.9% managed between 0.5 and 1 hectare, and just 5.0% cultivated over 1 hectare. The average farm size of 0.4736 hectares suggests

that most respondents are smallholder farmers with relatively small landholdings.

This finding highlights small-scale farming's prevalence in rural Nigeria, characterized by fragmented landholdings and limited mechanization. Small farms restrict farmers' ability to boost production, adopt new technologies, and benefit from economies of scale, affecting productivity and household income. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, smallholder farmers constitute a large share of agricultural producers in developing nations and are crucial for food security despite limited land access (FAO, 2021). The findings align with the World Bank's report, which notes that limited land access remains a barrier to agricultural commercialization and rural growth in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2022). Small farm sizes can also heighten farmers' vulnerability amid insecurity, climate change, and declining resources.

Table 1 Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Percentage (%)	Mean (\bar{X})
Sex		
Male	42.5	
Female	57.5	
Age		
<30	10.3	
30-39	32.7	41.54
40-49	34	
50-59	7.6	
Marital status		
Single	8.8	
Married	77.5	
Divorced	1.3	
Widowed	12.5	
Number of household members		
<5	16.3	
5-8	65.6	6.73
9-12	18.9	
Years of farming experience		
<10	15.1	
10-20	52.5	
21-30	25.2	18.25
31-40	7.6	
Level of education		
No formal education	10.0	
Primary school attempted	6.2	
Primary school completed	23.8	
Secondary school attempted	12.5	
Secondary school completed	37.5	
Tertiary education	10.0	
Number of years spent in school		
0	10.0	
1-4	8.8	
5-10	32.7	8.66
11-15	40.1	
> 15	8.8	
Monthly household income		
<20000	10.1	

20000-29000	38.9	
30000-39000	26.3	36162.5
40000-49000	13.8	
50000-59000	5.1	
≥ 60000	6.3	

Source: Field Survey 2023

B. Institutional Characteristics of the Respondents

➤ *Primary Occupation*

Table 2 indicates that agriculture remains the main livelihood, with 68.8% of respondents citing farming as their primary job. This trend is consistent with national and regional patterns, as rural communities in Nigeria and much of sub-Saharan Africa heavily depend on agriculture for income, food, and employment (FAO, 2021; World Bank, 2020). The figures also show that 18.8% are traders and 7.5% are civil servants, illustrating a typical rural economy where non-farm activities are present but still secondary to farming.

The implications are profound: with a large portion of the population dependent on agriculture, any disruption—particularly insecurity—directly endangers livelihoods, food supply, and community stability. Research indicates that insecurity, such as conflict, banditry, and farmer–herder clashes, decreases farm productivity, limits access to farmland, and weakens rural resilience (Odo & Nwokedi, 2019; Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2018). Prolonged insecurity leads to lower yields, income losses, and increased vulnerability to food insecurity for farming households (FSIN, 2021). The prevalence of farming among respondents underscores the crucial need for targeted actions, including enhancing security, livelihood protection programs, and agricultural support, to safeguard rural economies and prevent further declines in food security.

➤ *Secondary Occupation*

Table 2 shows that 51.2% of respondents engaged in secondary farming, 26.3% participated in trading, and 6.3% worked as civil servants. This distribution suggests that

insecurity affects multiple livelihood groups, not only farmers. When insecurity disrupts farming, trading, and public-sector work, households struggle to maintain income and meet basic needs. Similar studies have shown that insecurity reduces access to farmland, restricts market activities, and weakens overall economic stability in rural communities (FSIN, 2021; Odo & Nwokedi, 2019). This highlights the need for targeted interventions to protect diverse livelihood sources.

➤ *Membership of Any Social Organization*

Table 2 indicates that every crop farmer surveyed is part of at least one social organization. This implies that belonging to social groups might improve farmers’ access to information, support systems, and collective approaches to managing insecurity. Previous research has demonstrated that social groups commonly act as platforms for exchanging agricultural knowledge, issuing early-warning alerts, and implementing community safety measures (FAO, 2021; United Nations, 2021).

The table shows that the majority of respondents were part of religious groups (88.8%), followed by farmers’ associations (8.8%) and other social groups (2.5%). Joining these organizations can boost community cohesion and collective action, which may improve the ability to respond to insecurity. Studies indicate that social organizations often offer training, awareness programs, and mutual support, helping members manage threats to their livelihoods (FSIN, 2021; Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2018). This implies that involvement in social groups can significantly help reduce insecurity and strengthen resilience.

Table 2 Institutional Characteristics of the Respondents

Primary occupation	Percentage (%)	Mean (\bar{X})
Farming	68.8	
Trading	18.8	
Civil servant	7.5	
Others	5.0	
Secondary occupation		
Trading	26.3	
Civil servant	6.3	
Farming	51.2	
others	16.2	
Membership of any social organization	100	
Type of social organization		
Farmers association	8.8	
Religious group	88.8	
Others	2.5	
Source of farm labour		
Family	38.8	
Hired labour	61.3	

Estimated size of farmland(hectares)		
0.1-0.5	61.6	
0.6-0.9	33.9	0.4736
1.0 and above	5.0	

Source: Field Survey 2023

C. Type of Insecurity Prevalence in Enugu State Among Crop Farmers

Table 3 indicates that crop farmers in Enugu State face various insecurity challenges. The most prevalent issue is the lack of access to affordable agricultural inputs, affecting 97.7% of farmers. This is followed by crop theft or vandalism and water insecurity, both at 96.3%. Other significant concerns include climate-related threats at 93.8% and land disputes at 91.3%. Farmers also experience theft of equipment (86.3%), market insecurity (82.5%), land tenure problems (77.5%), and interpersonal conflicts (72.5%). Although less frequent, violent clashes with herders (48.8%),

cattle damage (35%), and attacks by armed groups (32.5%) remain serious threats.

Farmers encounter a range of economic, environmental, and security challenges that hinder their ability to sustain stable livelihoods. Evidence indicates that insecurity restricts access to farmland, disrupts agricultural output, and hampers market engagement, putting food security and rural resilience at risk (FSIN, 2021; FAO, 2021). The widespread issues of input shortages and crop theft also reveal structural weaknesses that limit productivity and income opportunities.

Table 3 Type of Insecurity Prevalence in Enugu State Among Crop Farmers

Type of insecurity	Percentage (%)
Lack of access to affordable agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer)	97.5
Theft or vandalism of crop produce	96.3
Water insecurity	96.3
Theft of agricultural inputs (fertilizers, pesticides) or input security	96.3
Climate change and environment degradation insecurity	93.8
Cases of crop damage due to wildlife intrusion	92.5
Disputes over land ownership or boundaries	91.3
Theft of farm equipment or machinery	86.3
Market insecurity	82.5
Land tenure insecurity	77.5
Interpersonal conflicts among farmers	72.5
Kidnapping or personal safety threats	67.5
Violent clashes with herdsmen	48.8
Cattle rustling or damage caused by herders	35.0
Attacks or threats by armed groups or bandits	32.5

Source: Field Survey 2023

D. Effects of Insecurity on the Agricultural Livelihood of Crop Farmers

The effects of insecurity on crop farmers' agricultural livelihoods were discussed in Table 4. The major factors include: food scarcity (\bar{x} =3.71; S.D= 0.60), increased postharvest losses(\bar{x} =3.56; S.D= 0.74), loss of crops(\bar{x} =3.56; S.D. = 0.61), Reduced income and profits(\bar{x} =3.46; S.D= 0.53), increased rural poverty(\bar{x} = 3.58; S.D = 0.65), Reduced food affordability(\bar{x} =3.48; S.D. = 0.68), decline in farmer yield(\bar{x} =3.43; S.D. = 0.69), limited access to seed (\bar{x} =3.44; S, D= 0.69), threat to personal safety(\bar{x} =3.26; S.D. = 0.78), lack of investment and financing (\bar{x} = 3.08; S.D = 0.69). This implies that high insecurity causes a higher reduction of food scarcity, increases postharvest losses, in which there is insufficient availability and access to an adequate amount of nutritious food to meet the dietary needs of a population, food scarcity can lead to malnutrition, stunted growth, and an increase susceptibility to diseases, posing severe challenges to food security and overall human well-being. Table 4 shows that insecurity has substantial negative effects on the agricultural livelihoods of crop

farmers. The most severe impacts include food scarcity, increased postharvest losses, loss of crops, reduced income, rising rural poverty, reduced food affordability, declining yields, and limited access to seeds. These outcomes indicate that insecurity disrupts every stage of agricultural production, from planting to marketing. When farmers cannot safely access farmland, store produce, or obtain inputs, food availability declines and households face greater nutritional and economic vulnerability. Studies have shown that insecurity contributes to reduced productivity, higher food prices, and increased malnutrition in affected communities (FAO, 2019; FSIN, 2021).

The minor constraints include forced migration (\bar{x} = 1.70; S, D = 0.95), disruption of social activities (\bar{x} =2.31; S, D =0.96), reduced agricultural diversity (\bar{x} =2.49; S, D = 0.78), abandonment of agricultural activities (\bar{x} =2.41; S, D = 0.84), stress affecting mental health (\bar{x} =2.45; S, D = 0.87). The findings also reveal moderate effects such as threats to personal safety and reduced investment, which discourage long-term agricultural planning. Minor but still relevant constraints include forced migration, disruption of social

activities, reduced crop diversity, abandonment of farming, and stress affecting mental health. These outcomes reflect broader social and psychological consequences of insecurity, which weaken community resilience and reduce farmers' capacity to sustain their livelihoods. Similar research confirms that persistent insecurity forces farmers to relocate,

abandon fields, and experience emotional distress, all of which further undermine agricultural stability (United Nations, 2021). Overall, the results demonstrate that insecurity creates a cycle of reduced production, economic hardship, and social disruption, posing a serious threat to food security and rural well-being.

Table 4 Effects of Insecurity on the Agricultural Livelihood of Crop Farmers

Effects	Mean	Std. Deviation
Food scarcity	3.71*	0.60
Increased rural poverty	3.58*	0.65
Loss of crops	3.56*	0.61
Increased postharvest losses	3.56*	0.74
Reduced food affordability	3.48*	0.68
Reduced income and profits	3.46*	0.53
Limited access to seed	3.44*	0.69
Decline in farmer yield	3.43*	0.69
Threat to personal safety	3.26*	0.78
Increased production cost	3.10*	0.76
Lack of investment and financing	3.08*	0.69
Destruction of agricultural infrastructure	2.91*	0.87
Restricted movement	2.80*	0.91
Disruption of economic activities	2.69*	0.77
Limited access to extension services	2.68*	0.90
Limited access to land	2.65*	0.77
Reduction of available farm labour	2.60*	0.85
Reduced the size of the farm	2.56*	0.88
Reduced agricultural diversity	2.49	0.78
Stress affects mental health	2.45	0.87
Difficulty accessing the market	2.44	0.86
Abandonment of agricultural activities	2.41	0.84
Disruption of social activities	2.31	0.96
Forced migration	1.70	0.95

Source: Field Survey 2023, Cut off Mean: 2.5

E. Level of Challenges Faced by Crop Farmers in Effort to Reduce Insecurity

Table 5 shows that farmers face several major challenges in their efforts to reduce insecurity. The most severe constraints include pest and disease outbreaks (\bar{x} =3.73; S.D. = 0.66), poor access to quality seeds (\bar{x} =3.64; S.D. = 0.73), water scarcity (\bar{x} =3.65; S.D. = 0.60), increased postharvest losses (\bar{x} =3.63; S.D. = 0.66), land tenure insecurity (\bar{x} =3.41, S.D.= 0.81), climate change (\bar{x} =3.39; S.D. = 0.63), soil degradation (\bar{x} =3.43; S.D. = 0.88), high input cost of machinery(\bar{x} =3.30; S.D= 0.64), theft and vandalism(\bar{x} =3.29; S.D. = 0.75), changing consumer preferences and demands (\bar{x} =3.29; S.D. = 0.75), inadequate infrastructure (\bar{x} =3.19; S.D. = 0.80), policy and regulatory challenges (\bar{x} =2.69; S.D. = 0.79), lack of access to credit and insurance (\bar{x} =2.98; S.D= 0.86) and inadequate agricultural extension service (\bar{x} =2.93; S.D= 0.88). These challenges indicate that insecurity interacts with structural agricultural

problems, making it difficult for farmers to maintain productivity and protect their livelihoods.

Issues like pest outbreaks, water scarcity, and postharvest losses highlight broader national trends where insecurity hampers farming activities, limits input access, and weakens markets (FAO, 2021). Land-tenure insecurity and climate pressures worsen farmers' vulnerability, restricting their ability to invest in long-term improvements. Research shows that ongoing insecurity increases costs, reduces yields, and lowers profits (FSIN, 2021). This supports Omodero's (2021) point that efforts to boost agricultural livelihoods fail when insecurity continues to obstruct access to farmland and key resources.

Overall, the findings show that insecurity not only endangers physical safety but also worsens existing agricultural challenges, hindering farmers' ability to attain sustainable production and economic stability.

Table 5 Level of Challenges Faced by Crop Farmers in Effort to Reduce Insecurity

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pest and disease outbreaks	3.73	0.66
Water scarcity	3.65	0.60

Poor access to quality seeds	3.64	0.73
Increased postharvest losses	3.63	0.66
Soil degradation	3.43	0.88
land tenure insecurity	3.41	0.81
Climate change	3.39	0.63
High input cost of machinery	3.30	0.64
Theft and vandalism	3.29	0.75
Changing consumer preferences and demands	3.28	0.75
Inadequate infrastructure	3.19	0.80
Lack of access to credit and insurance	2.98	0.86
Inadequate agricultural extension service	2.93	0.88
Policy and regulatory challenges	2.69	0.79

Source: Field Survey 2023, Cut-off Mean: 2.5

F. Strategies Employed to Address the Challenges of Insecurity Among Crop Farmers

The findings in Table 6 indicate that crop farmers adopted several important strategies to reduce the effects of insecurity on agricultural production and rural livelihoods. Among the most highly rated strategies were promoting community development ($\bar{x} = 2.90$; S.D. = 0.38), improving access to quality seeds and fertilizers ($\bar{x} = 2.86$; S.D. = 0.35), providing education and training opportunities ($\bar{x} = 2.85$; S.D. = 0.39), and ensuring access to mechanized farming equipment ($\bar{x} = 2.84$; S.D. = 0.40). Respondents also considered the introduction of agricultural technologies and innovations such as irrigation systems ($\bar{x} = 2.81$; S.D. = 0.45), availability of farmland ($\bar{x} = 2.80$; S.D. = 0.49), and supportive government regulatory policies ($\bar{x} = 2.75$; S.D. = 0.49) as critical measures for addressing insecurity-related challenges in farming communities.

Other notable strategies identified by the farmers included youth-friendly agricultural programmes ($\bar{x} = 2.46$; S.D. = 0.49), improved market access ($\bar{x} = 2.46$; S.D. = 0.55), easier access to loans and grants ($\bar{x} = 2.46$; S.D. = 0.55), and improved access to agricultural credit facilities ($\bar{x} = 2.45$; S.D. = 0.53). Although these recorded relatively lower mean scores than other measures, they still underscore the importance of economic empowerment and institutional support in strengthening farmers’ resilience under conditions of insecurity.

Farmers perceive insecurity not just as a security issue but also as a development challenge that needs combined social, economic, and institutional strategies. Focusing on community development and education suggests that

boosting local capacity, social bonds, and human resources can improve resilience and decrease vulnerability to violence. This aligns with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2020), which stressed that community-driven methods, local surveillance, and rural support are crucial for reducing insecurity and maintaining agricultural productivity.

Similarly, the focus on better inputs, mechanisation, and irrigation tech highlights the importance of innovations that boost productivity, helping farmers manage disruptions caused by insecurity. As the Food and Agriculture Organization (2022) reports, access to climate-smart technologies, farm inputs, and mechanised systems greatly enhances food production and livelihood security in conflict zones. This supports the findings of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2021), which states that access to credit, extension services, and youth-centered agricultural programs can improve rural adaptation and lessen socio-economic pressures that often worsen insecurity in farming areas.

Moreover, focusing on supportive government policies and land access highlights the importance of institutional governance in tackling rural insecurity. Effective agricultural policies improved rural infrastructure, and fair access to resources are essential for strengthening food systems and enhancing rural livelihoods in developing nations (World Bank, 2021). Overall, the results show that reducing insecurity among crop farmers requires a comprehensive approach that combines rural development, institutional backing, agricultural innovation, and community involvement.

Table 6 Ascertain Strategies Employed to Overcome the Challenges of Insecurity

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Promote community development	2.90	0.38
Improved seeds and fertilizer	2.86	0.35
Provide access to education and training	2.85	0.39
Mechanized farming equipment	2.84	0.40
Availability of land	2.80	0.49
Initiating youth friendly agricultural programme	2.76	0.49
Government regulatory and support policy	2.75	0.49
Promote rural economic development	2.68	0.55
Effective agricultural extension service	2.50	0.57

Access to market	2.46	0.55
Improved access to credit	2.45	0.53
Easy access of loan and grants	2.41	0.52
Improved rural infrastructure, such as roads, electricity and water supply	2.81	0.45
Introduction of technologies and innovations, such as irrigation systems	2.75	0.49
Provide support for agro-processing by adding value to agricultural products and processing them into finished or semi-finished products	2.83	0.44

Source: Field Survey 2023, Cut-off Point = 2

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study revealed that crop farmers in the area are mainly middle-aged men and women with extensive farming experience and long-term exposure to insecurity's impact on agriculture. It also highlighted higher involvement of women in crop cultivation, emphasizing their vital role in household food security and rural livelihoods. Nonetheless, ongoing insecurity due to conflict, displacement, social unrest, and socio-economic pressures continues to hinder agricultural productivity and the welfare of farming households.

The findings demonstrate that insecurity undermines farmers' willingness and capacity to invest in modern agricultural practices, mechanised equipment, and farm infrastructure. This limitation reduces productivity and keeps many rural households within a subsistence-oriented production system, with limited opportunities for expansion and economic advancement. Insecurity also creates physical safety concerns that restrict farmers' access to farmland, disrupt planting and harvesting, damage crops, and reduce agricultural output. These challenges threaten food security, rural incomes, and sustainable agricultural development. Similar observations have been reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization, which noted that conflict and insecurity significantly reduce agricultural productivity and weaken rural livelihood systems in vulnerable communities (FAO, 2023).

The findings align with the World Bank's stance, highlighting that insecurity hinders private and household investment in agriculture, restricts access to markets and productive resources, and exacerbates poverty among smallholder farmers (World Bank, 2022). Additionally, research indicates that rural insecurity leads to food shortages, displacement of farming communities, and reduced involvement of young people in agriculture, jeopardizing the sector's long-term sustainability (IFAD, 2021).

➤ *Based on the Findings of the Study, the Following Recommendations are Proposed:*

- Government, local communities, and relevant stakeholders must enhance collaboration to enforce effective rural security strategies, foster social stability, and support sustainable agriculture. Farmers should have access to affordable credit, farm inputs, financial assistance, and production incentives to recover from insecurity impacts and bolster their resilience.

- Agricultural extension agencies, working with non-governmental organizations and all levels of government, should regularly conduct on-farm training, demonstrations, and awareness campaigns. These initiatives aim to provide farmers with practical strategies to counter insecurity, rebuild their confidence, enhance their adaptive capacity, and motivate ongoing engagement in farming.
- Efforts to boost youth involvement in agriculture should include targeted empowerment initiatives, improved access to land and finance, agricultural training, and support for innovation. Promoting youth participation will enhance food security, increase awareness of insecurity-related issues, and help develop resilient communities for the future.

Overall, tackling insecurity in rural farming communities demands a comprehensive approach that integrates good governance, agricultural assistance, rural development programs, and community involvement to promote sustainable food production and protect livelihoods.

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