
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE OPEN GRAZING PROHIBITION AND RANCHES ESTABLISHMENT POLICY IN TARABA STATE

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Abstract

Farmers and herders have coexisted for centuries all over the world. Increased competition for natural resources, on the other hand, has resulted in farmer-herder clashes across Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria has 18.4 million cattle, with 13 million owned by households. Livestock accounts for 21% of agriculture's Gross Domestic Product. In Nigeria, there is a demand-supply imbalance in the dairy and meat sectors. The livestock sub-sector faces numerous challenges, including limited water and land resources. In order to reduce the violence between farmers and herders Government introduced ranches policy in Nigeria. This study assess the effect of ranches policy in Nigeria. Journals, newspapers, books, as well as information from several policy documents (from the Federal and State Ministry of Agriculture) served as secondary sources for the data used in this study. Thomas Homer-Dixon (1999) Environmental Scarcity Theory offers theoretical flavor Findings show that as open grazing is out of date, ranching is becoming more and more popular as a solution to the ongoing farmers/herders conflict. The study suggests establishing sustainable cow ranching in various states amongst others, across the states, the laws limiting open grazing must be examined in order to broaden and include the legislative process. State officials would be responsible for ensuring the involvement and participation of all parties in the process, Ensure effective law enforcement, state authorities should include local traditional and religious institutions, as well as community vigilante and neighborhood watch groups, whose roles in conflict resolution have grown in importance in the face of escalating insecurity and state failure and the legislation should address the core causes of the conflicts, particularly the issues caused by open grazing, particularly in rural places where governmental presence is waning.

Keywords: Open Grazing, Grazing Reserve Security, Ranches, Conflict, Herders,

Farmers

Introduction

Farmers and herders have coexisted for centuries all over the world. Increased competition for natural resources, on the other hand, has resulted in farmer-herder clashes across Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria has 18.4 million cattle, with 13 million owned by households. Livestock accounts for 21% of agriculture's Gross Domestic Product. In Nigeria, there is a demand-supply imbalance in the dairy and meat sectors. The livestock sub-sector faces numerous challenges, including limited water and land resources.

The threat posed by global climate change is one factor that has led to the scrambling for grazing by Fulani herders. Adeagbo, (2012) asserts that climate change is blamable for the loss of biodiversity at a rapid rate in the environment today. It has gone a long way in redefining the way Fulani herders operate thereby making both a ticking time bomb that is waiting to detonate if nothing tangible is done because of the rise in farmers/herders conflict in the country. From 2001 to 2018, about 60,000 deaths were recorded in multiple clashes, it is estimated that more than 300,000 were displaced across states, 176,000 in Benue, about 100,000 in plateau, and 100,000 in Nasarawa and about 19,000 in Taraba (Premium Times Report, March 25, 2021).

In Nigeria, disputes between sedentary farmers and nomadic herders are nothing new. In the midst of centuries-long symbiotic and independent connections that were built on reciprocity, exchange, and support, they have risen for decades (Moritz, 2010). However, since 1999, they have returned more frequently and with greater lethality, peaking between 2015 and 2019 despite the fact that President Mohammedu Buhri, who took office in 2015, has been designated as Meyetti Allah's Cattle Breeders Association's patron ever since. The conflicts have occasioned social dislocation, human displacement, loss of lives and livelihood, resulting in strained and rancorous relationship between hitherto peaceful neighbours, especially in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

Thus, the human casualties and economic losses caused by conflicts in Nigeria, particularly in the Middle Belt region. In 2013 and 2014, the conflicts resulted in over 63 and 1,229 deaths respectively. Between 2015 and 2018, there were 3,641 deaths as a result of violent clashes between farmers and herdsman. The conflict expanded to other regions in Nigeria, with high death tolls recorded in 2016, 2017, and 2018. In 2019 and 2020, inter-communal violence and attacks by bandits caused more deaths in the North-Central and North-Western regions. The severity of the conflict is compared to the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency that started in 2009.

Amnesty International (AI) documented cases of killings and destruction in many communities in the country. The AI report showed "how government's inaction fuels impunity, resulting in attacks and reprisal attacks, with at least 3,641 people killed

between January 2016 and October 2018, 57 per cent of them in 2018 alone. (Ikhilae, 2021). The group also documented about seven cases, in which it claimed, security forces were aware of attacks but did nothing. “Many attacks lasted for hours, in some cases days, even in communities where security forces were not far away. The response of security forces in some of the instances in Adamawa, Kaduna, Taraba, Benue, Plateau, and Zamfara states was so slow and poor that villagers accused them of complicity in the attacks.

In 2018, the Nigerian Federal Government expressed its support for the ban on open grazing of cattle across the country and recommended the establishment of ranches instead. President Muhammadu Buhari formed a committee to investigate the clashes between herdsmen and farmers and find solutions. In 2021, both the Northern Governors' Forum and the Nigeria Governors' Forum unanimously agreed that open grazing was no longer sustainable due to urbanization and population growth. They advocated for the adoption of ranching as an alternative to open grazing. The proposal for ranching also addressed concerns from landowners.

In some cases, especially in Adamawa and Taraba states, security forces knew attacks were about to happen and saw the attackers but refused to act. Despite these attacks and the killing, which have gone on for years, there has been reluctance on the part of the government to investigate and prosecute perpetrators and this has only encouraged more attacks and killing,” (Amnesty International, 2018). While, it is not all the herders that are to be blamed for frequent clashes with farmers, it is instructive to note that some persons among Fulani herders have, over the years and in seeking to exercise their supposed rights to freedom of movement, to inhabit and conduct business in any part of the country, gradually metamorphosed from the once benign minders of cows and related animals, usually armed with sticks, to murderous criminals, armed with AK47 rifles and other dangerous weapons, with which they kill, rape, kidnap, and maim innocent men and women fellow countrymen and women. The Taraba state government equally enacted The Taraba State Anti-Open Grazing Law to ban open-rearing and grazing of livestock and also to provide for the establishment of ranches and other related matters.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the fight between farmers and herders over pasture and farmland is a significant and rising one that has resulted in several fatalities and is escalating tensions, especially in the country's Middle Belt. Due to dryness and drought in the north, pastoralist ranchers have been driven to look for grazing grounds further south, which has led to competition for resources and conflicts with established farmers. Additionally, they weaken food security, encourage the spread of small guns, because a considerable number of people to lose their homes and livelihoods, cause significant human displacement, and divert funds intended for development. Particularly affected are vulnerable populations like women, children, and youth, IDPs, and

indigenous people.

The last decade has seen escalating tensions between primarily sedentary farmers and nomadic and semi-nomadic herders in Taraba State that have resulted in hundreds of deaths and the displacement of tens of thousands across the nation. In response to these rising tensions and cycles of attacks, some state governments; Benue, Ekiti, Abia, Ondo, and Taraba State in particular, passed legislation that banned open grazing. Taraba state passed the legislation on May 22, 2017. The law prohibited the open grazing of livestock, or the practice of allowing cattle to roam freely in search of pasture and water, beginning on November 1, 2017 and called instead, for the establishment of ranches within the state.

The study aims to address a pressing issue surrounding the Open Grazing Prohibition and Establishment of Ranches Law, 2017, which sparked intense support and opposition. Advocates of the legislation passionately champion it as the ultimate solution to the ongoing farmer-herder conflict in the state, vehemently asserting its merits. Conversely, opponents vehemently denounce the law, arguing that it unfairly discriminates against herders, fails to offer viable alternative livelihoods, and effectively forces herders to leave the state. Within this contentious environment, the Open Grazing Prohibition Law officially came into effect on November 1, 2017. However, its impact has been severely undermined due to widespread non-compliance and inadequate enforcement measures.

Methodology

The study adopted ex-post facto research method. Ex post-facto is a typology of descriptive research which the independent variable(s) have already occurred and in which an investigation occurred and investigator starts with the observation of dependent variable(s) and then study the independent variable in retrospect for their possible relationship to an effect on the dependent variable(s). Accordingly, secondary data, is employed the study adopted a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach. This study relied heavily on secondary source of data such as journals, newspapers, books and all works analyzed were content based, with a view to ascertaining the support or otherwise of the stated objectives.

Conceptual Clarification

Open Grazing

Idowu, (2017) claims that cattle are traditionally herded by moving them about in huge groups in a nomadic or migratory manner to feed in wide-open places and uncultivated grasslands. Grazing is the conventional term for this kind of animal nutrition. The nomadic Fulani tribe essentially lives in the wilderness and is heavily involved in conflicts between herders and nearby farms. A Fulani herdsman goes in search of pastures to graze his cattle, frequently accompanied by his wife and children who help him care for the animals and provide other services as they go to find greener pastures.

Grazing Reserve

As the name suggests, grazing reserves are sections of land that have been designated, set aside, and protected for pastoralists' exclusive or nearly exclusive use (Muhammad and Mohammed, 2015). Grazing reserves and group ranches are similar in that both include clearly defined tracts of rangeland that serve as grazing grounds for certain livestock herds (Oxby, 1982).

Adeoye, (2017) sees grazing reserve as an area set aside for the use of pastoralists and their herds. The concept involves the gusseting, demarcating and developing an area as a grazing area by the provision of the basic needs of herdsmen and their animals such as pasture, feed supplements, water resources (boreholes and dams, marketing outlets and other infrastructure). Again Oruonye *et al* (2020) citing Ingawa *et al* (1989).

Ranching

According to Oruonye, (2020), ranching is a long-established agricultural practice that entails rearing livestock, generally grazing animals like sheep and cattle, on demarcated land structures. In many nations, a ranch is often an open area enclosed by a sturdy wood fence. Ranching helps to develop the value chain for animals, which in turn helps to create jobs. Ranch-raised animals are also safe from predators and do not trespass on the land of other farmers. Consequently, ranching is a highly advised farming technique.

Herders

Fulani herdsmen are ethnic group found in West and Central Africa. They are largely nomadic breeders or pastoralists whose primary livelihood is raising livestock (cattle, goats and sheep) (Tenuche & Ifatimehin, 2009). Usually, the Fulani engage in the random movement of livestock through towns and across borders because they do not have a fixed abode. They move from place to place and their movement largely depends on the season and pastoral state. In addition, availability of water, extreme winds, high temperatures also influence their choice of area (Bello, 2013)

Fulani Herders

According to Habeb (2018), the Fulani herdsmen are the predominant ethnic group in West and Central Africa. Tenuche and Ifatimehin (2009), on the other hand, see them as primarily nomadic breeders or pastoralists who depend on raising cattle, goats, and sheep as their main source of income. Due to their lack of a stable residence, the Fulani typically migrate their animals at random between towns and across borders. They wander around, and a lot of what they do depends on the time of year and the pastoral situation.

Farmers and Herdsmen

Farmers are defined as simply those who cultivate land for plant production in Kolawole, Amoge, and Akinwande (2018). The majority of these people are natives

of the area in which they live. They are widespread in Nigeria's rural areas and engage in subsistence farming. On the other hand, herdsmen are people who raise livestock; they are primarily of Fulani descent. This study specifically targets the transhumant category, not the sedentary type. This is due to the fact that sedentary individuals have fewer records of conflicts with their host communities than the transhumant category, which grazes cattle and moves from one site to another in order to obtain animal feed. In Nigeria, there are farmers in every region. The majority of Nigerians work as farmers, whether on a small (peasant) or large scale. All kinds of crops are grown by farmers for either profit or personal consumption. Almost all ethnic groups in Nigeria are farmers.

Insecurity

Wherever insurgency exists, people experience insecurity of different sort of employment insecurity, food insecurity, water insecurity, health insecurity, etc. Ukpe, Nweze, and Arene (2016) assessed the vulnerability of farm households to food insecurity and found out that underfunding of the farmers was central to the crisis of food and insecurity in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework: The Environmental Scarcity Theory

Thomas Homer-Dixon is one of the proponents of this theory, which proposes that environmental scarcity could produce violent conflicts. Such conflicts range from local environmental degradation, to ethnic clashes, to civil strife (insurgencies), scarcity induced wars out of a loss of sources of livelihoods and the negligent behaviour of the state and elite class (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Lending support to the environment and conflict argument, Brunborg and Urdal (2005) specified that "demographic factors may, however, also be potential causes of conflict", with factors like "high population pressure" making negative impact on scarce resources such as arable land and fresh waters which could lead to violent conflicts. Environmental scarcity has "a variety of critical social effects, including declining food production, general economic stagnation or decline, displacement of population, and the disruption of institutions and traditional social relations among people and groups" (Homer-Dixon, 1998:346).

In his own contribution, Benjaminsen (2008) argues that "scarcity is believed to be rapidly increasing in many marginal environments, in particular, owing to ongoing processes of environmental degradation primarily by escalating population growth". Arguing differently but within the environmental scarcity debate, Gleditsch's critique of the literature on armed conflict and the environment claims that "all conflicts of interest derive from scarcity. However, not all resource conflicts lead to overt conflict behaviour, and even fewer to the use of force. Environmental degradation may exacerbate resource conflicts because it reduces the quantity or quality or the resource in question" (Gleditsch 1998).

The Environmental Scarcity Theory is a relevant framework for assessing the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Policy in Taraba State, particularly in

relation to its impact on environmental resources and conflicts arising from resource scarcity. The theory suggests that environmental factors, such as the scarcity of essential resources like water and grazing land, can contribute to conflicts and social instability.

In the context of Taraba State, the policy aims to address the environmental and social challenges associated with open grazing by prohibiting it and promoting the establishment of ranches. This policy recognizes the environmental scarcity of grazing land and water resources, which have been a source of conflict between herders and farmers in the state. By implementing ranching as an alternative to open grazing, the policy seeks to mitigate resource competition and reduce conflict.

The Environmental Scarcity Theory can help in assessing the effectiveness and potential outcomes of this policy. It emphasizes that resource scarcity can lead to conflicts as different groups compete for limited resources. In Taraba State, the scarcity of grazing land has been a major source of conflict between herders and farmers, often resulting in violence and loss of lives. By understanding this theory, policymakers can evaluate how the policy addresses the underlying issue of resource scarcity and assess its potential to reduce conflicts.

The theory also highlights the importance of managing environmental resources sustainably to avoid scarcity and conflicts. It suggests that policies should focus on long-term resource management, conservation, and equitable resource allocation. In the context of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Policy, assessing its provisions for sustainable land and water resource management can provide insights into the potential effectiveness and environmental impact of the policy.

Additionally, the theory underscores the need for inclusive and participatory decision-making processes to address conflicts arising from environmental scarcity. It suggests that involving all relevant stakeholders, such as herders, farmers, and local communities, in policy formulation and implementation can foster cooperation and reduce tensions. Assessing the level of stakeholder involvement and the inclusiveness of the policy-making process can help evaluate its potential for addressing social and political dimensions of the conflict.

In summary, the Environmental Scarcity Theory provides a relevant framework for assessing the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Policy in Taraba State. It can help evaluate the policy's effectiveness in addressing resource scarcity, managing environmental resources sustainably, and fostering inclusive decision-making processes to mitigate conflicts arising from environmental factors.

The Quest for Ranching in Taraba State

Another attempt at moving on with the grazing reserve policy was made through the instrumentality of the national agricultural policy of 1988, which sought to allocate

10% of Nigeria's landmass to grazing reserves. Oruonye, (2020) noted that ranching is a long existing agricultural practice that involves raising of livestock, which commonly includes grazing animals such as cattle and sheep, on designated land structures. Usually in many countries, a ranch would be an open space secured with a fence made from strong wood. Ranching facilitates creation of employment opportunities as it develops the livestock value chain. Animals reared in a ranch are also protected from predators and do not intrude other farmer's properties. Hence, ranching is a highly recommended farming practice. Apart from the above, there exist a gazette reserve in Taraba State.

Table-3: Gazetted Grazing Reserves in Taraba State

SN	Grazing Reserve	Location	Size	Surveyed	Present Status	Demarcated	Gazetted	Gazette Notice	Level of Development
1.	Didango	K/Lamido	15km ²					No.1 Vol. 13, 1987	-
2.	Zing	Zing						-	1 borehole
3.	Gankwe-Aswen	Donga	115km ²					No.37 Vol. II, 986	-
4.	Mayo Kam	Bali	45km ²					No. Vo8,198	1 Earth dam, 5 boreholes
5.	Jibu	Wukari	15km ²					-	-
6.	Sunkani	ArdoKok a	21km ²					No.9 Vol. II, 1986	2boreholes, 1 NS
7.	Mallum	A/Kola	21km ²					-	-
8.	Kirim	K/Lamido	16km ²					No.3 Vol. 13, 1987	
9.	Yonko	Zing	14km ²					-	-

The major grazing routes in Taraba state are as follows:

- i. Karim Lamido – Jebjeb (Plateau State)
- ii. Karim Lamido – Lamurde – Bachama (Adamawa State)
- iii. Karim Lamido – Tingou – Lafiya – Kiri (Adamawa State)
- iv. Dorofi – Gembu – Nguroje (Taraba State)
- v. Nguroje – Maisamari – Abong – Takum (Taraba State)
- vi. Takum – KatsinaAla – (Benue State)
- vii. Jalingo – Chidiya – Wukari (Benue State)

viii. Wukari – Akwana (Benue State)

On the efficiency and effectiveness of the routes, it is clear that there were what could be called footpath, motor path etc. Those were drawings made and eventually improved on by our local technicians and is something that has no legal backing. So, it becomes difficult to enforce thus, the problem persists.

Coincidentally, there have been farmers/herders conflict in all the major stock routes above leading to deaths and millions of properties destroyed. This is an indication that open grazing is old fashioned and should be discontinued and ranching adopted to ensure peace and economic development. The attempt to legalize ranching and ban open grazing saw in 2011, an effort initiated to address the problem by coming up with a bill titled, 'the national grazing route and reserve commission law, 2011'. The proposed law which aims at establishing grazing routes and grazing reserves for pastoralists became stalled soon after it was introduced in the national assembly

Table 1: Some States and their Anti-Grazing Prohibition Law in Nigeria

State	Year	Law
Ekiti,	2016	The Prohibition of Cattle and other Ruminants Grazing Act
Taraba	2017	The Anti-Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Act
Bayelsa	2002	The Livestock Breeding and Marketing Regulation Law
Abia	2019	The Control of Nomadic Cattle Rearing and Prohibition of Grazing Routes/Reserve Law
Ondo	2019	The Ondo State Forestry Law, which prohibit cattle trespassing and cattle pasteurization without the authority in writing of a prescribed government official

Source: *Daily Trust, 12 February, 2021, p.17*

The Ruga/ Colony Option

RUGA is a Hausa term that means “Cow Settlement”, it is also an acronym for an English phrase, Rural Grazing Area (RUGA).Ruga policy which depict 'human settlement policy is a Nigerian policy aimed at reducing herder-farmer conflicts. It was proposed by the Buhari Muhammad Presidency to end the violence between nomadic Fulani herders and sedentary farmers. Though RUGA was to promote cattle breeding and meet production in the country for self-sufficiency. The Policy is not intended to conquer, Islamize, Fulanized or colonize anybodyas insinuated. Most importantly, according to Apikins, (2020), the RUGA Policy allows ranches to be established, but only in gazette grazing reserves. The plan also wants to buy 15000 hectares of land in each of the federation's states for the policy's execution; each state is also anticipated to co-finance the RUGA Project, implying that the limited State fund will be redirected into the program.

The governor of Taraba State, Darius Dickson Ishaku is equally critical of the Ruga

policy because he is of the opinion that it is old fashion. The position is as blunt as thus;

Ruga is colonialism; it is not about cattle; it is not even about grasses. It should not only be suspended, but it should also be cancelled completely," he said. The whole Ruga scheme should be canceled. You can't do a Ruga in the entire country. I don't accept it. It is not workable, and it will not work in Taraba state. Already, I have in place the Anti-Open Grazing Law in Taraba state that prohibits open grazing but encourages ranching. And we are making a lot of progress on ranching. I submitted a request to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for us (Taraba) to be given a loan for us to do the ranching but the CBN has refused to approve it, for reasons I don't know, otherwise, I would have showcased what ranching is in Taraba state. It is the best form of practice in modern days, if indeed you are talking about cattle, grasses and grazing. But I don't think they (federal government) are talking about cattle; I don't agree that they are talking about grasses. They are talking of something else, colonization. (The Cable, July 9 2019).

The governor must be relying on the Land Use Act of 1978 which provided the legal precedence for state governors to establish laws dictating how land is distributed within their states, it also provides that there must be means of recourse for the revocation of land rights by the state. However, according to the Open Grazing Prohibition Law the ranching lease and permissions granted may be revoked without

Acceptability of the Grazing and Ranching Law in Taraba State

The Myetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) and the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore, the two most prominent Fulani and herder socio-cultural associations, have expressed different public positions on the Open Grazing Prohibition Law. On the one side, the MACBAN expressed its willingness to obey the law, but requested that the implementation date be shifted to allow sufficient time for sensitization of herders on alternatives to open grazing.²⁸ On the other, as mentioned previously, the Miyetti Allah Kautal Hore openly opposed the law and threatened to prevent its implementation on the grounds that it contradicts the constitutional provision for freedom of movement. Oruonye, (2020).

Open Grazing Law in Taraba State seems to be failing because the Taraba State chapter of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association did not accept the law and also challenged it in court because the State government has failed to put in place measures to ensure that the herders have a smooth switch from the age-long tradition of open grazing to relatively more challenging system of ranching. (Punch, 14, February, 2018:7).

Table 4: Taraba State Proposed Pilot Ranches (2017)

SN	Zone	LGA	Town	Nearest village	Size	Year of Proposed Est.
1.	Northern Senatorial Zone	Ardo Kola		Sdikani	21km ²	2017
2.	Central Senatorial Zone	Bali	Mayo Kam	Vicbalkom farm	45km ²	2017
3.	Southern Senatorial Zone	Donga	GankweAsse n	Ananum	115km ²	2017

Source: Oruonye, (2020).

Although this system has the disadvantage of movement restrictions, it is beneficial in that it enhances land use by making use of marginal or range areas that cannot support any meaningful crop farming. However, ranching has its own disadvantage which is why it has not been a well applicable method of livestock production in Nigeria. Ranching is a capital intensive venture that requires a lot of money to build. It requires the construction of fences, grain stores, feedlots, and watering places among others. This is why many cattle-herders are not willing to venture into ranch establishment. Also some herdsmen perceive ranching schemes to be an obstruction of freedom and as a forceful imposition by technicians and livestock assistants that are not exactly in the livestock business.

Passage of anti-open grazing law by the state Assembly in 2017 and signed into law but have not become operational to achieve peace after several violent clashes in various parts of the state, clashes and conflicts have continued unabated (**Atelhe and Cornelius, 2018**).

The Nigerian National Livestock Transformation Plan (NNLTP)

The National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLP) is a government initiative aimed at modernizing the livestock industry and promoting peaceful coexistence between herders and farmers in Nigeria. The plan seeks to reduce friction between nomadic herders and crop farmers by encouraging a shift to sedentary, mechanized livestock farming, thereby reducing cattle movement. The main objective is to establish ranches of various sizes in public grazing areas, supported by improved services such as water irrigation for pasture and feed production. The plan aims to decrease competition for land and water, increase meat and protein production, boost incomes, and prevent future conflicts between herders and farmers. Initially implemented in seven pilot states, the plan expanded to include all 19 northern states. It envisions the construction of numerous ranches, creating millions of new jobs and prioritizes conflict resolution, justice, peace, human capital development, and addressing cross-cutting issues like

gender and youth. While focusing on cattle herding, the plan also aims to benefit small-scale farmers and other livestock producers by encouraging crop cultivation for fodder and promoting overall agricultural development.

Taraba State Anti-Open Grazing Law

The Taraba State government enacted the Anti-Open Grazing Law to prohibit open-rearing and grazing of livestock and establish ranches. The law aims to prevent conflicts between farmers and herders, promote modern animal husbandry techniques, create job and investment opportunities in livestock farming, prevent crop destruction and property damage caused by open grazing, control the spread of diseases and improve the quality of livestock breeds.

To administer and oversee the implementation of the law, a committee was appointed by the governor. The committee consists of various members including the Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources as the chairman, the Attorney-General of the state, the Special Adviser on Security, the State Commandant of NSCDC, three chairmen of Local Government Councils representing the three Senatorial Districts, representatives of the Commissioner for Police and the Department of State Security Service, three second-class chiefs representing the Senatorial Districts, the state Vigilante or Joint Task Force Chief, and directors from relevant departments and ministries.

The committee has the authority to invite or co-opt individuals for specific purposes related to its duties. Its functions include determining the conditions for operating livestock farming and establishing personal, commercial, and general ranch farms. It also evaluates the suitability of locations, facilitates or sanctions the lease or sale of lands for ranching purposes, collaborates with the Federal Government and other stakeholders for support in establishing ranches, inspects, certifies, and registers all ranches in the state, issues permits for ad-hoc grazing ranches when necessary, maintains a register of all ranches and owners, prescribes hygiene standards for meat and dairy activities at ranches, ensures compliance with veterinary checks and quarantine measures, enforces regulations on the movement of livestock outside of ranches, ensures defined pathways for livestock movement without encroachment on farmlands or obstruction of traffic, secures approved ranches to prevent livestock from straying, determines suitable land sizes for ranch allocation, and appoints Livestock Special Control Marshals and Ranch Administration Officers based on recommendations from the Chairman of the Local Government Area.

In accordance with the Taraba State Anti-Open Grazing Law, the Governor may issue instructions to the committee for the performance of its tasks in general or in particular circumstances. If the Governor is not convinced that a member of the committee's

membership is not in the public interest, he has the authority to have that individual removed. The Governor will have discretion over how the committee's chairman and members carry out their tasks. More importantly, the committee must publish its policies for livestock rearing and ranch locations at the start of each year. Additionally, they must develop the terms and circumstances for the temporary as well as permanent entrance of animals. According to this law, there are costs that must be paid in order to regulate the growing of livestock, and these fees cannot be more than N1, 000 for each cow, horse, or camel and N500 for each sheep or goat. A ranch house may not cost more than N50, 000 annually and N10, 000 monthly. Additionally, the committee must create a Livestock Special Control Marshal for the state, with offices in each local government.

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Offence and Penalty under the Open Grazing Law

Under the provision of this Law, anyone who openly grazes livestock or moves livestock by means other than in a Motor vehicle or moves without permit commits an offence and shall be liable upon conviction

- i. For any first offender a fine not exceeding N500, 000 or imprisonment of 1 year;
- ii. For any Subsequent offences, a fine of not less than N1, 000,000:00 or imprisonment not exceeding two years.

If, while moving the animals illegally and without a license, they destroy any farm crops, pollute a pond, or harm any property, the owner of the livestock must go to prison, pay the above-mentioned fee, and compensate the owner of the damaged property. Willful cattle rustlers are guilty of an infraction and face a minimum 5-year prison sentence. Any unauthorized individual who uses guns against herders will face a sentence of imprisonment of at least 5 years if convicted. The Taraba State law banned the open Grazing of livestock therefore making it unlawful for anyone to graze farm animals. Grazing of livestock can only be done within the confinement of a ranch.

Conclusion

A cattle breeding is a private business and not that of government, therefore allowing cattle to stray is a primitive practice. Agricultural produce contributes in great measure to GDP and therefore any attempt to frustrate farmers in Nigeria will spell doom to sustainable development. There is no lasting peace yet as the government and policy makers have not yet arrived at any solution to end the invasion that the Fulani herdsmen continue to cause in the farming communities nationwide through their open grazing way of grazing their cattle.

The enactment of laws that regulate animal husbandry through mandatory establishment of ranches is in line with evolutionary processes in human society. When a given societal practice becomes a threat to the existence of the society, laws are of necessity enacted to regulate the practice and preserve the society. However, the laws must seek a balance of contending interests as well as address the fundamental causes of the contentions. Against this background, open grazing prohibition laws in Nigeria should seek to balance the interests of both sedentary farmers and nomadic herders by addressing the root causes of the conflicts. For instance, while the laws focus on prohibition of open grazing and encourage the establishment of ranches, they should also make efforts to address the challenges posed by rising population and increased human activities that bring pressure on land-use resources.

Recommendations

In light of the foregoing, the following recommendations are proffered:

- i. Across the states, the laws limiting open grazing must be examined in order to broaden and include the legislative process. State officials would be responsible for ensuring the involvement and participation of all parties in the process.
- ii. Ensure effective law enforcement, state authorities should include local traditional and religious institutions, as well as community vigilante and neighborhood watch groups, whose roles in conflict resolution have grown in importance in the face of escalating insecurity and state failure.
- iii. The legislation should address the core causes of the conflicts, particularly the issues caused by open grazing, particularly in rural places where governmental presence is waning.
- iv. Myetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, should work with farmers to ensure harmonious cohabitation. The Association should be prepared to pay for crop damage caused by their livestock.

- v. Pastoralists should buy property and develop ranches instead of the offensive cattle colony concept, because cattle rearing is a private business. In this case, the government can assist them like it does other businesses. Support systems and protocols should be in place to allow herders to access land for ranching and get grazing licenses within the state.

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