



# Food Crop Sector Performance in Nigeria

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## 1. Introduction

Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) show that between 2014 and 2016, 780 million people, amounting to 98.1 per cent of the hungry people in the World live in the developing countries. Paradoxically, the developing countries account for a substantial proportion of uncultivated arable land in the World. In fact, Africa alone has around 60 million hectares of uncultivated arable land, constituting about 60 per cent of the global total (McKinsey Global Institute, 2010). Nigeria, for example, has around 80 million hectares of land suitable for agriculture (Finintell, 2013; Agba, 2012; Yakubu & Akanegbu, 2015). Still, the World Food Programme (2016) reports that Nigeria houses about 40 per cent of the undernourished people in West Africa, has one-third of her children under five stunted, and alarming rates of both child and adult obesity.

To address the food security problems, past Nigerian governments made agriculture the focal point in their manifestoes and consequently their policy

frameworks, but the statistics still show very poor improvements. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets zero hunger in the world and by implication, Nigeria in 2030. However, since Nigeria could not even meet the MDG target of reducing hunger by half, it is clear that if nothing is done, meeting the current SDG goals will be impossible. To this effect, this study analyses the performance of the food crop sector in Nigeria to appreciate their status and find out their strength, weakness, the opportunities and the threats therein.

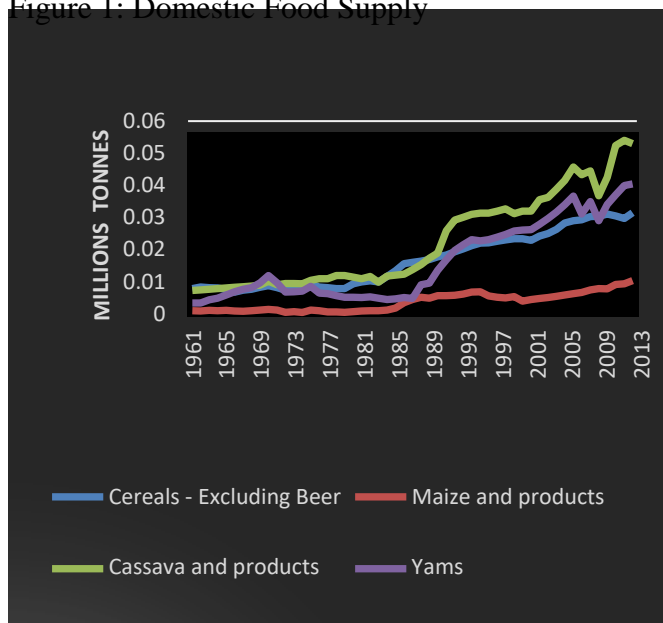
## 2. Food Security in Nigeria

According to FAO (1996), food security exists in a place when all the inhabitants have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life at all times. Therefore food security indicators include food availability, per capita food production, and supply, percentage of under-five who are underweight, percentage of under-five who are stunted, domestic food price

volatility, political stability, and absence of violence as well as domestic food price index.

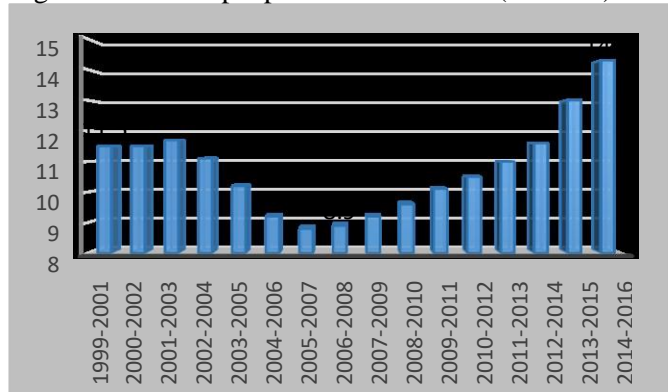
Figure 1 below contains the gross domestic food supply in the country from 1961 to 2013. It shows that there has been a consistent but gradual increase in the quantity of the domestic production and supply of the different types of food since 1962, with cassava and products taking the lead.

Figure 1: Domestic Food Supply



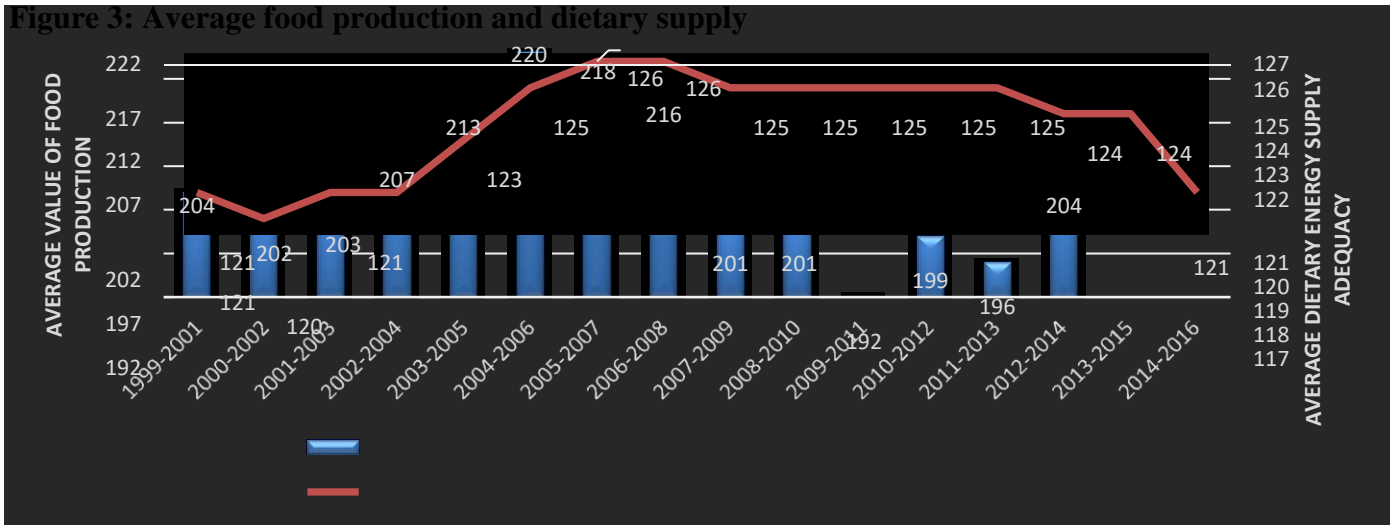
To find out if these growth in food production were enough to sustain the population, figure 2 plots a three-year average of the number of undernourished people (in millions) in the county. In line with the food deficit, the number was high between 1999 and 2001 with around 11.5million Nigerians being undernourished, but decreased to its lowest value (within the review period) of 8.8 million between 2005 and 2007 and increased geometrically again to its all-time high average value of 14.3 million between 2014 and 2016.

Fig 2: Number of people undernourished (millions)



The statistics in figure 2 show that although there was a consistent increase in food production and supply in the country over the review period, the growth might not have measured up with the growth in population.

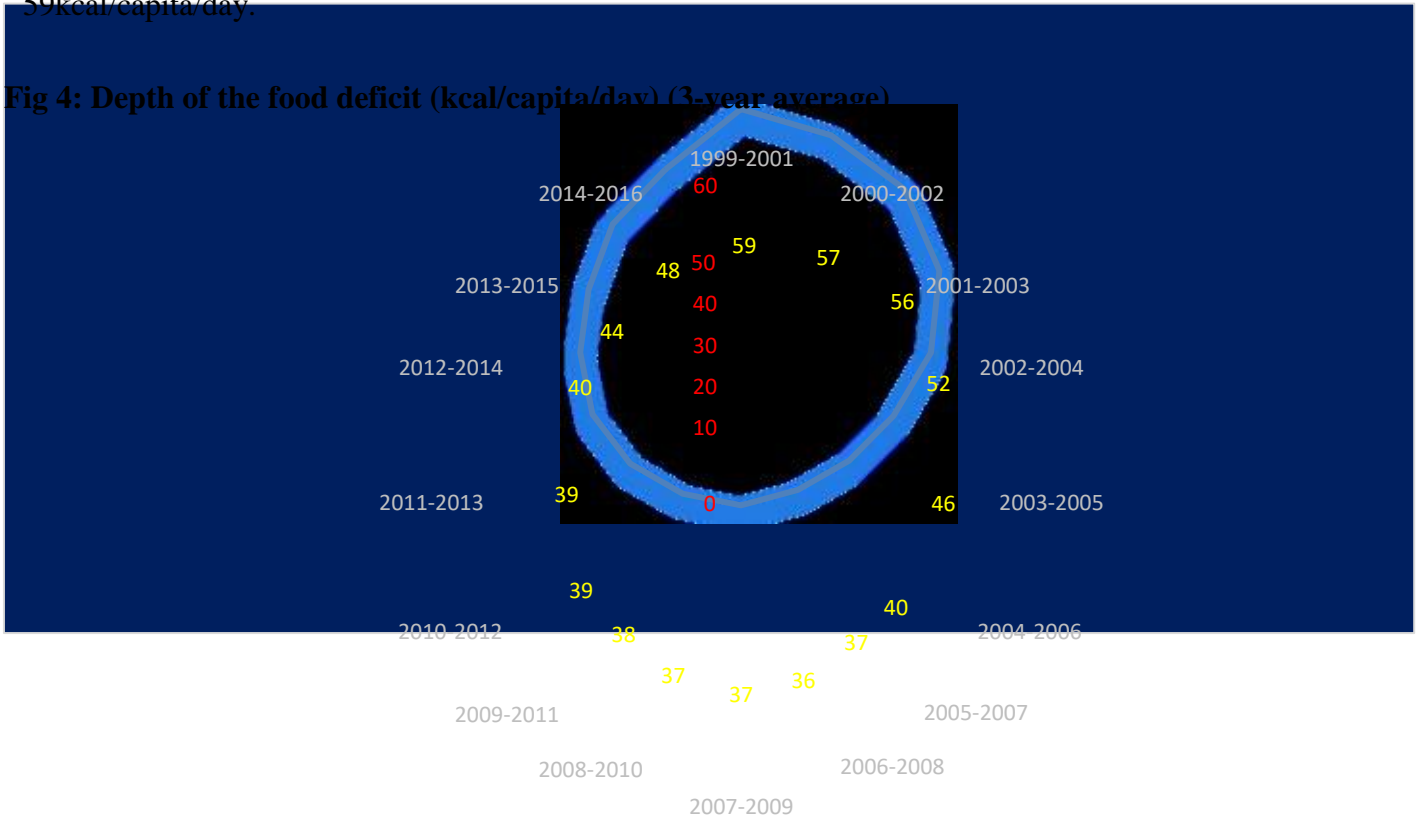
To clarify the situation, figures 3 and 4 below contain the per capita information on food production and supply in Nigeria within the review period. Figure 3 shows a three-year average of the value of food production per capita in the country. Between 1999 and 2001, the value stood at US\$204 per capita, it slightly dropped to 202 in 2000-2002 and then increased to its highest value of US\$220 per capita between 2004 -2006. From 2006, the value decreased again to US\$192 per capita, which is the lowest value since 1999 and gradually increased back to US\$204 per capita within 2012-2014. What this indicates is that the per capita value of food production in Nigeria is currently at its 1999 value. The right column of the same Figure 3 shows that the dietary energy supply adequacy follows the same trend as the food production, increased to its highest value between 2006 and 2008, and has been declining since then. This is an indication that there has been no significant and sustained improvement in both the value of food production per capita and the dietary energy supply in the country since 1999 despite the exponential increase in the population.



Average value of food production (constant I\$ per person) (3-year average)  
 Average dietary energy supply adequacy (%) (3-year average)

Figure 4 below plots a three-year average of food deficit in kcal per capita per day in Nigeria from 1999 to 2016. It shows that food deficit was at its peak between 1999 and 2001 with a value of 59kcal/capita/day.

It decreased gradually from this high value to its lowest value of 36kcal/capita/day between 2006 and 2008, before increasing gradually again to its 2016 value of 48kcal/capita/day.



### **3. SWOT Analysis of Food Sector Performance in Nigeria**

The SWOT analyses give a comprehensive résumé of the nature of food sector development and performance in Nigeria. The SWOT analysis is as depicted in Figure 5 below.



**Figure 5: SWOT Analysis of Food Sector Performance in Nigeria**

STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Large expanse of arable land (91 million hectares with around 80 million suitable for agriculture), large population, Agriculture friendly climatic zones, Diverse climate for the production of different crops, low exposure to most natural disaster, and almost zero exposure to Tsunami, and available labour.</i></li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Small scale farming, Poor mechanisation, Obsolete equipment, Lack of value addition and poor agricultural value chain, insufficient research for improved varieties and methods, Poor marketing Strategy, Lack of storage and/or processing technology/facilities, etc.</i></li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Large expanse of land to allow for mechanisation; Availability of water for irrigation; Large market owing to the huge population and free trade zones; large income from crude oil, Abundance of raw materials for farm inputs e.g. fertilizers from petro chemical industry; Support of international organizations e.g. CIDA, FAO, World Bank, AfDB</i></li> </ul>
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Large revenue from the oil Sector, Food Importation, Climate Change, Insecurity/conflicts, Poor road infrastructure, Insufficient access to long-term credit, the land tenure system in the country, Poor power and transportation infrastructures, Low technological knowhow, Pests and diseases, and the high rate of poverty and inequality, Unstable economic and agricultural policies, Lack of incentives</i></li> </ul>

#### 4. Summary and Conclusions

This miserable state of food availability in Nigeria vis-a-vis its massive and geometrically growing population estimated at over 193 million people in 2016 and projected to be the third most populated country in the world by 2050, calls for concern. Available statistics show that Nigerian is having food insecurity problem - insufficient food production per capita; low average dietary energy supply adequacy that has been declining since 2013 and a high level of food deficits that has been on the increase since 2006. Due to these food deficits, over six million children in Nigeria under the age of five are stunted due to malnutrition, and the consumer price of foods has been high and increasing. Compared to other African countries, the depth of food deficit in the country was significantly below that of Ghana, China, and that of the average of the African countries as of 1999. However, there has been no improvement since then. Whereas there was 53.2 per cent, 40.2 per cent, and 25.3 per cent decreases in the

depth of food deficit in Ghana, China, and the average for the African countries, respectively from 1999 to 2014 there was only 18.6 per cent decrease in Nigeria.

The SWOT analyses in the study reveal the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of food sector performance in Nigeria. An interesting finding from the analysis is that although significant revenue from crude oil exportation can be both a threat and opportunity for food security in the country. It is more of a threat because the earnings from crude oil are used to finance food importation rather than investment in agriculture, out-competing the domestically produced ones. It is, therefore, recommended that substantial revenue from crude oil should be used to finance local food production through the importation of machines for agricultural mechanisation, construction of irrigation facilities, and giving loan at an affordable rate to farmers in the country.

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