



# Nigerians just want to eat

ANALYSIS OF FARMERS & FOOD TRANSPORTERS  
CHALLENGES LIKELY TO IMPEDE NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY

JANUARY 2021





### **DISCLAIMER**

The data contained in this report is only up-to-date as at Friday, 11 December 2020. Some of it is subject to change during the natural course of events. SB Morgen cannot accept liability in respect of any errors or omissions that may follow such events that may invalidate data contained herein.

Our researchers employed methods such as one-on-one interviews, desk research and polling to collate the available data. Our editors sifted through the data and prepared the report, using various proprietary tools to fact-check and copy edit the information gathered.

Our publicly released reports are formatted for easy and quick reading, and may not necessarily contain all the data that SB Morgen gathered during a given survey. Complete datasets can be made available on request.

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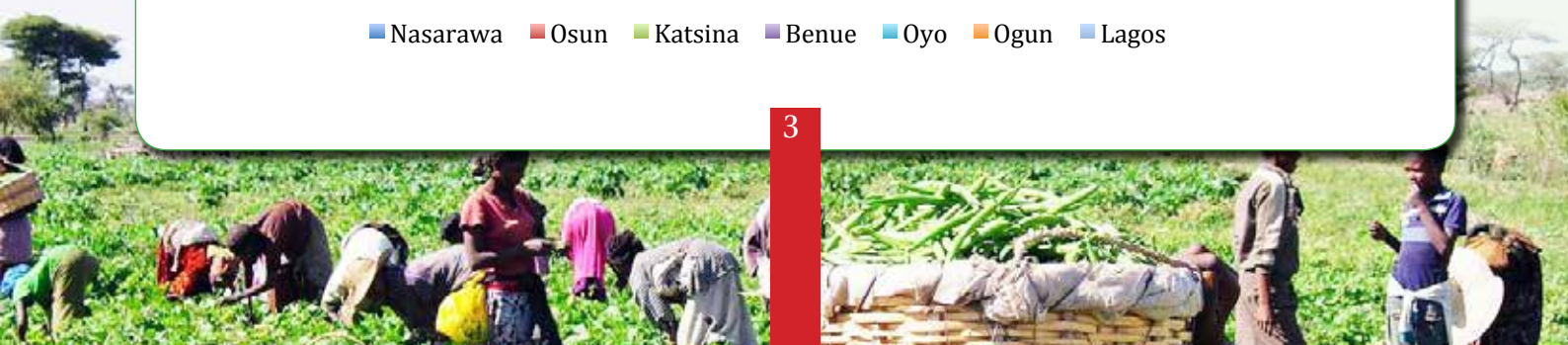
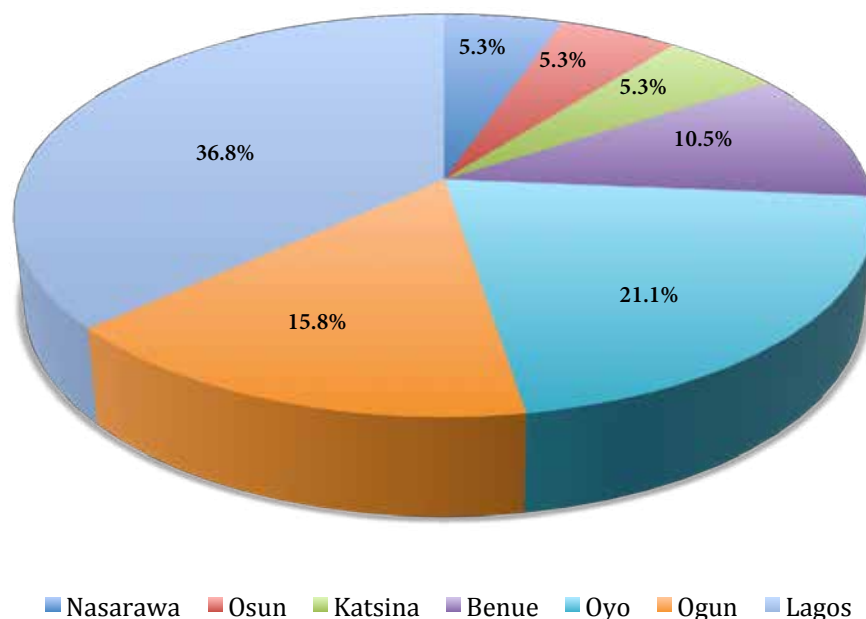




**D**espite the dependence on crude oil for economic sustainability, agriculture has always had a central role to play in the Nigerian psyche and economy. This can be seen in the various match programmes and slogans rolled out by successive governments to boost the sector, and aid in food self sufficiency, security and productivity. From the Agricultural Development Programmes of the 1970s to the re-establishment of the National Agricultural Land Development Authority in 2016.

Even though the sector is largely characterised by smallholder farmers engaged in subsistence farming with inefficient production techniques manifested in technical and allocative inefficiencies, it still makes up nearly 25% of the country's GDP. Nigeria's agricultural sector is broadly divided into four sub-sectors: i) crop production; ii) forestry; iii) livestock; and iv) fisheries. Among these sub-sectors, crop production accounts for the largest segment in the industry with 87.6% of generated output, followed by livestock, fishery and forestry at a generated output of 8.1%, 3.2% and 1.1% respectively (NBS, 2019). There have been renewed efforts of the government as seen in the CBN Anchor Borrower Programme, Young Farmers Network Programme and international donor agencies such as the World Bank, USAID, IFAD, FAO etc to increase productivity along various agro value chains. In the wake of the current COVID-19 pandemic, a litany of challenges have confronted players in the agriculture sector, especially crop producers. An indicative survey and in-depth interviews conducted by SBM Intelligence across seven (7) Nigerian states gave detailed insights into the challenges of farmers and food transporters in Nigeria.

The chart below shows the states from which data for the analysis were gathered:



Of the seven states, majority of the respondents had their farms in the South-West States (73.7%) - Lagos (36.8%), Oyo (21.1%) and Ogun (15.8%)-, 10.5% had their farms in Benue while the remaining 15.9% were equally distributed between Nasarawa, Osun and Katsina

The chart below shows the types of crops grown by the farmers across the seven states:



**TYPES OF CROPS GROWN BY FARMERS**

The farmers surveyed were mostly crop farmers who grew a wide range of staples with fruits, vegetables, cassava and maize farmers in the majority.

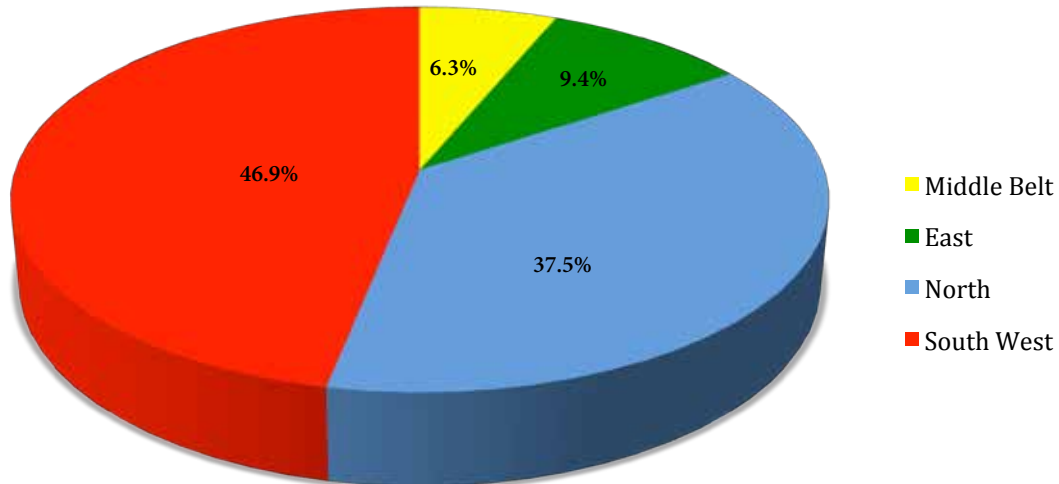




## Travel Routes of Food Transporters

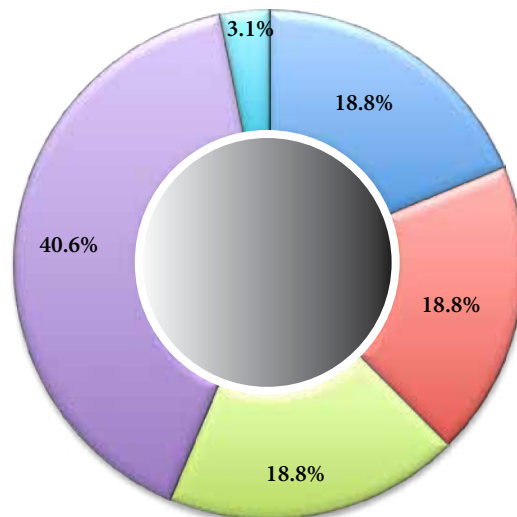
Below is a chart representing the travel route of food transporters:

### WHERE DO YOU GET FARM PRODUCE FROM?



The food transporters surveyed revealed that food items are conveyed to and from the South West, North, East and Middle Belt regions of the country. 46.9% conveyed food items to and from the South West, 37.5% from the North and the remaining 15.6% from the East and Middle Belt regions. These travels are done mostly on a bi-monthly basis as shown in the chart below.

### HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRAVEL TO GET FARM PRODUCE?



*Chart showing Travel Frequency of Food Transporters in Nigeria*





The challenges faced by farmers and transporters were quite unique, although with some overlaps. A number of challenges listed by the farmers surveyed include: rising costs of inputs, lack of irrigation system and storage facilities, inaccessible credit facilities, weather fluctuations evident in flooding and droughts, etc. On the other hand, transporters' unique concerns were mainly around multiple taxation and incessant harassment from security personnels and local government officials.

Interestingly, both farmers and transporters have overlapping areas of concern which include; poor transportation systems, bad road network and insecurity.

### Rising Cost of Inputs

Farmers expressed displeasure over the scarcity and high cost of farm inputs, particularly fertilisers, improved seeds and pesticides which impede food productivity. These challenges impeding increase in food productivity could worsen with the consistent rise in various agronomic inputs ranging from agrochemicals like synthetic fertilisers, hormones, pesticides, herbicides and seed inputs. Apart from fertiliser input that is currently produced within the country which is high-priced because of the increase in its cost of production, most of the other stated farm inputs are imported.

The restriction on international movement on persons and commodity items has further affected both supply and prices of these items. This is evident in the current rise in the price of staple food items. Furthermore, due to the hike in prices of these agronomic inputs as a result of shortage in supply, most smallholder farmers interviewed attested to reducing the number of required inputs per acreage which will in turn reduce expected harvests.

### Inaccessible Credit Facilities

Finance was also listed as a major constraint faced in expanding their farming activities. The high cost of input means that they are not guaranteed of the levels of production attained in the previous year and are largely incapacitated with the dwindling aid and grants. Some of the farmers surveyed went on to request for finance in the form of loans and grants as a proposed solution to their problems. Finance was cited by 16.1% of the farmers, making it the third major concern after good roads and security.

It is important to reiterate that most Nigerian farmers are peasants and are majorly small family farmers. Despite their importance to the national economy, most of them lack the capital to expand their farming activities. A majority of





these farmers cultivate below five hectares annually. The bureaucratic nature of securing loans or getting subsidies on input items creates more challenges for farmers, many of whom have little formal knowledge about how to secure these facilities. This further compounds problems in hiring labourers' and acquiring necessary farm machinery to carry out day-to-day farm operations.

### Access to Market

Marketing involves getting across to the populace desired agricultural products from the farmers to final consumers. While the restrictions posed as a result of the pandemic are slowly easing off, access to market remains a big challenge to farmers. In our survey, farmers highlighted good roads and transportation systems as some of the key changes they will want to see worked on. A combined 37.5% of farmers made a case for those two issues. Our in-depth interviews showed that if these were fixed, some farmers would prefer to travel to the urban markets themselves to sell their produce at better prices rather than give the produce out to wholesalers at rock-bottom prices.

### CHALLENGES FACED BY TRANSPORTERS

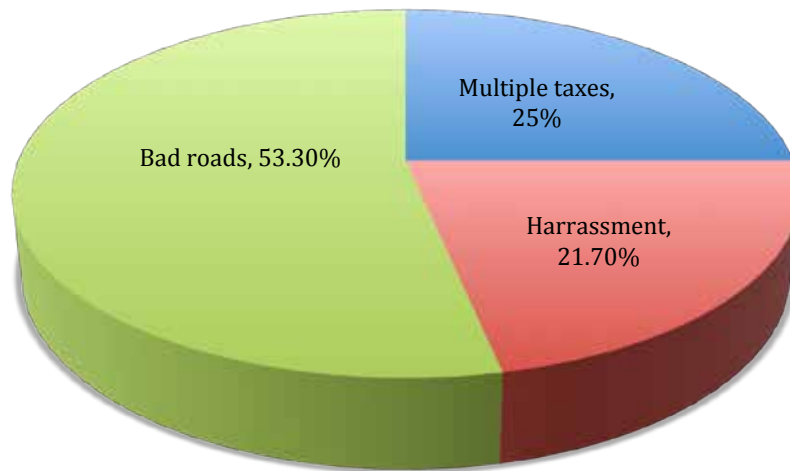


Chart showing the challenges of transporters

Transporters share similar concerns with farmers with access to market and bad roads making up the most common challenges faced, followed by multiple taxation and harassment.

Government regulations on large gathering of people carrying out these functions either at farm gates, rural markets or semi-urban markets pose a great threat to farmers. Due to the various restriction of movement during





the lockdowns across the country, especially the ban on interstate travel, the transportation sector shrank by about 50% in Q2 2020 according to the National Bureau of Statistics. This greatly affected the farmers' income, and in turn their standard of living as most farmers do not consume all the produce but sell off some farm produce to meet other pressing needs. Post harvesting, most farmers were unable to sell off their farm produce at relatively good prices, and the storage of such goods, especially perishable items like vegetables and Irish potatoes is difficult because of a lack of storage facilities and poor electricity supply.

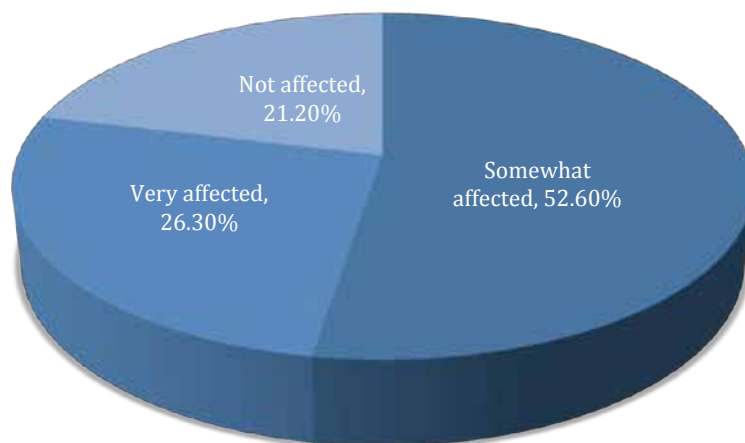
### Weather Fluctuation

Weather and climate are important factors determining the success and failure in crop and livestock production. Unfortunately, Nigerian farmers are at the mercy of adverse weather conditions - Nigeria still practices rain-fed agriculture which puts farmers at the mercy of adverse weather. During dry season, there is drought and flooding during rainy season.

Presently, extreme climatic events like flooding and drought are being witnessed in some states within the country. Flooding has been experienced mostly in the North, in states like Bauchi, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara, and some parts of Kwara. In fact, in Kebbi alone, 500,000 hectares of farmland were destroyed by flooding, with the cost being upward of ₦5 billion. Most of this farmland has been dedicated to rice, with serious implications for the price of the staple, which is already out of the reach of many, in the coming months.

In the South-West, the problem is lack of rainfall. Last year, the 'August break' actually began in early July and lasted through till the end of August. This prevented the planting of maize, cassava and cash crops like cocoa.

### TO WHAT EXTENT HAS YOUR HARVEST THIS YEAR BEEN AFFECTED BY EXTREME RAIN OR DROUGHT

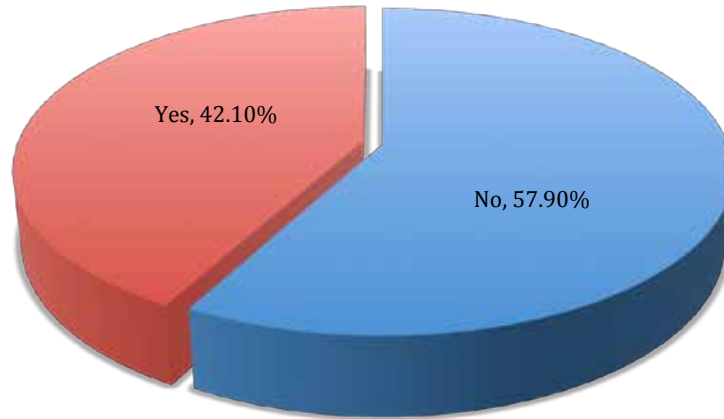




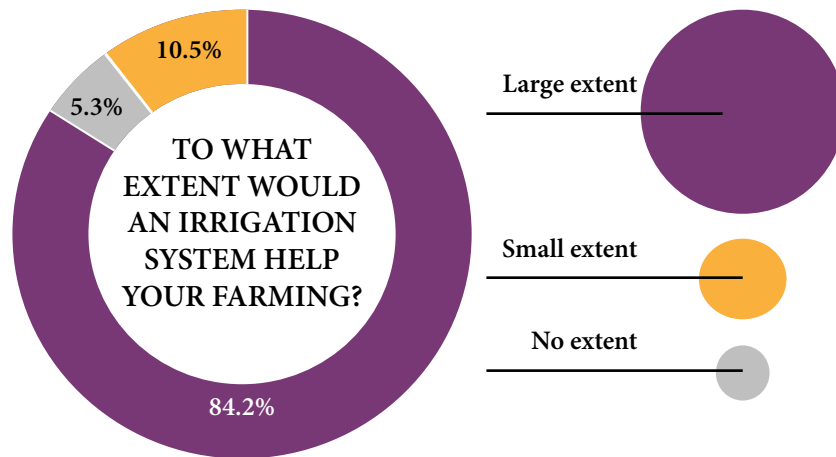


In our survey, we asked farmers if they were affected by the adverse conditions of drought and flood in 2020. 78.9% of the respondents agreed that they were affected (52.6% were somewhat affected, while 26.3% were greatly affected). Just a fifth (21.1%) of the interviewed respondents were not affected by drought and flooding.

**DO YOU OWN AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM?**



More than half of the farmers surveyed had no irrigation system, although they were of the opinion that it will help them in their farming endeavour.



94.7% of the respondents agreed to this need, However, the degree of agreement varied. A vast majority (84.2%) said they needed it to a large extent, and an additional 10.5% agreed that they needed it somewhat. Farmers are getting discouraged over their inability to own irrigation systems or the technology of Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) to support crops during adverse conditions while some are discouraged over lack of drainage equipment.

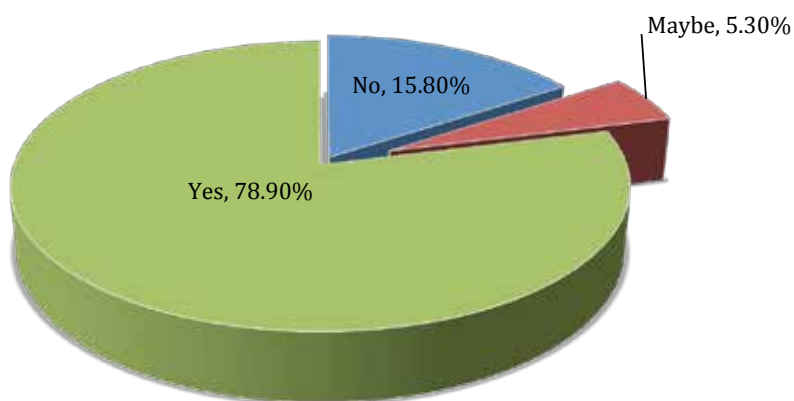




## Insecurity

The current major threat to the agricultural sector is insecurity. The activities of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen around the rural areas in the northern part of the country where a larger share of agronomic activities are carried out have impacted negatively on agricultural productivity and made farming dis-interesting to displaced farmers.

### ARE YOU SECURED ON YOUR FARM?



Surprisingly, security does not appear to be a major concern among our respondents, a majority of whom are based in the South-West. These conflicts are focused in the North Central and North-West States, with causes ranging from long-standing communal conflict, kidnapping, and banditry. These incidents have led to a fresh wave of displacement. The Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) indicated that over 480,000 IDPs reside mainly in host communities and in eight official camps within the state. An assessment in July 2020 by UNHCR in the Maradi Region of Niger Republic indicated there were more than 70,000 new refugees, mainly from Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states where the conflict continues to escalate. As a result, farmers in those states cannot access their land to farm, and this leads to reduced productivity.

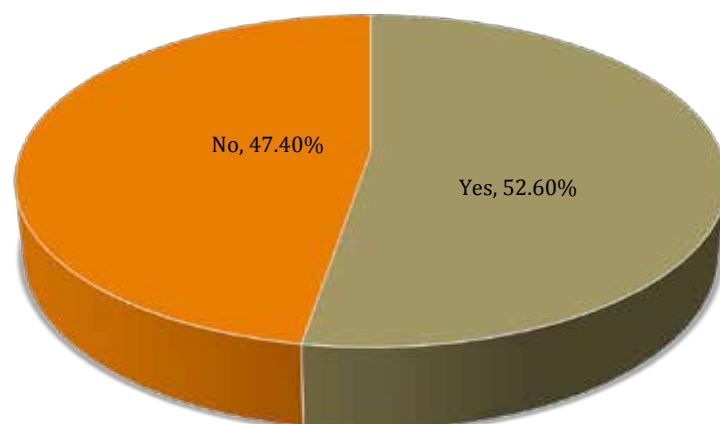
## Post-Harvest Losses

Agricultural products are easily perishable while production remains seasonal, and demand for farm produce is present throughout the year. Bridging this gap is adequate storage for farm produce, however, farmers of these outputs may be unable to acquire their own storage facilities. The absence of storage facilities forces farmers to sell their produce at low prices to middlemen who have their own warehouses. In our survey almost half (47%) of the farmers interviewed had no access to any kind of storage facilities.





## DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO ANY STORAGE FACILITIES



The lack of storage facilities contributes to post-harvest losses which could get as high as 60% for tubers, fruits and vegetables.

However, lack of storage is not the only factor contributing to post-harvest losses. Some of these losses occur during harvest and others occur while the commodities are in transit, during offloading (due to poor handling), and in varying degrees in the entire process from farm to fork.

### Research and Records

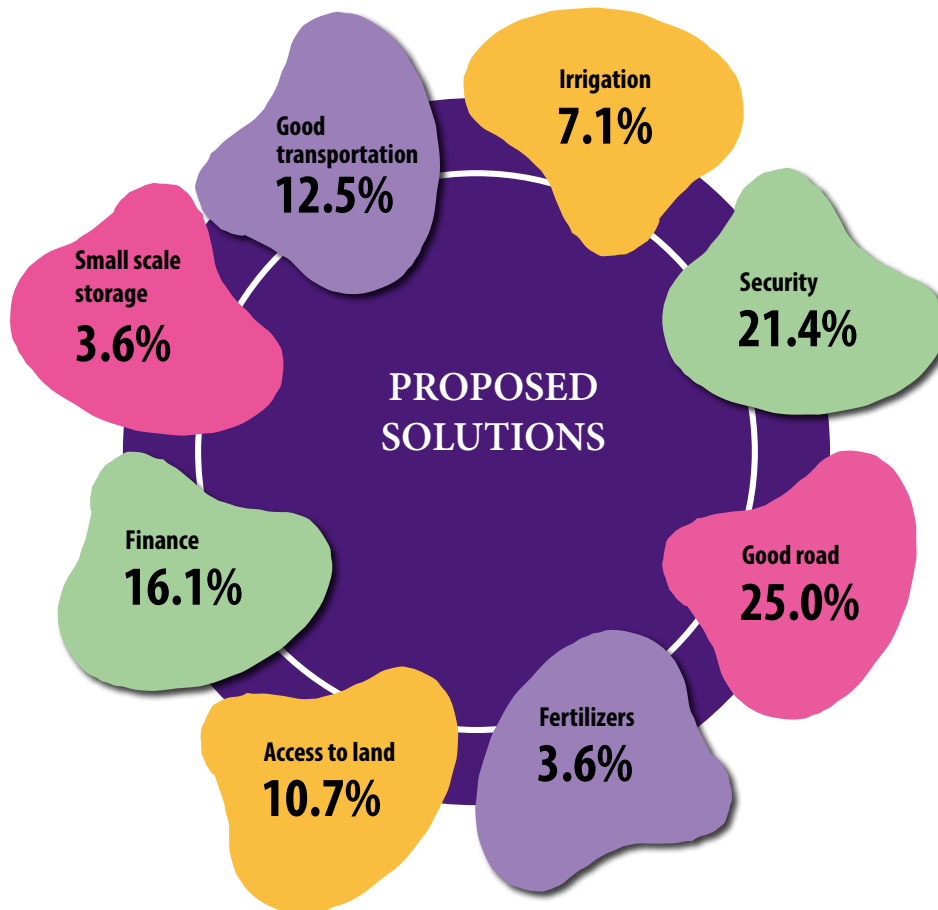
Agricultural research contributes greatly to enhancing crop and livestock productivity. It reveals innovative ways of carrying out farm operations with far reaching yielding results. However, this has always been hampered by fewer activities of government-owned research institutions due to lack of funds. Furthermore, farmers do not always have track records of farming activities that serve as a compass in forecasting future farm operations and avoiding pitfalls, hence adulteration of figures.

### Averting a Catastrophe

Now is the time for state and federal governments to prevent even higher food prices across the country through various short and long term measures. In the immediate, the government must fully reopen land borders and end the ban on using forex to import staple crops. After placing maize on the list of items no longer eligible for foreign exchange only on 14 July 2020, the President announced the release of 30,000 tons of maize from emergency reserves on 2 September, and also gave approval to four firms for the importation of 200,000 tons of maize, in what was an embarrassing about-face. This could replicate itself for items like rice and cassava in the coming months, items which millions of Nigerians depend for sustenance.



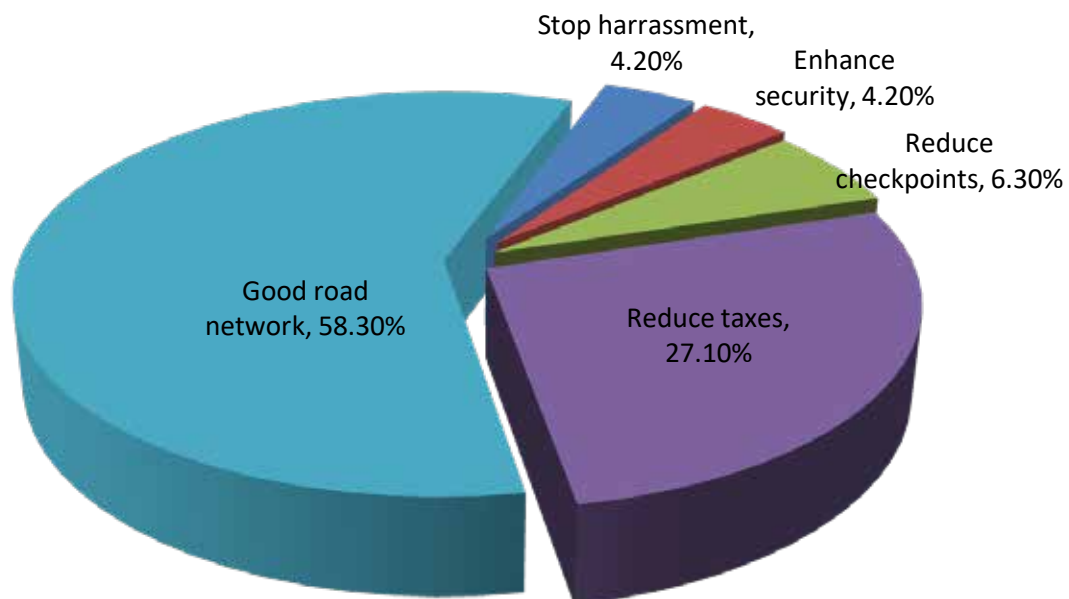
For the longer term, wider adoption of irrigation, facilitating the provision of early maturing and drought-resistant crop varieties and a switch to climate smart agriculture is the best way to guard against crop failure and poor yields. In our survey, we asked farmers and transporters the changes they wanted to see in the coming months from the challenges they identified, most of them want the government to fix access roads and provide adequate transportation that is cheap, effective and efficient. An efficient rail system will reduce the cost of transporting farm produce to the markets and improve food security. Security remains paramount followed by access to land and irrigation infrastructure. Some of the other factors mentioned were financing and the availability of a sizeable storage where most of their farm products can be stored. Away from the government, there are business opportunities for investors who would like to take





up a dual role of solving the problem of food insecurity and generating profit. In addition to these, transporters want some of their unique concerns met, like better roads, as well as put an end to multiple taxation and harassment by officials.

### SOLUTIONS TO TRANSPORTERS' CHALLENGES



Apart from good road networks and enhanced security addressed above, they want the multiple taxes paid while transporting goods between states to be stopped or at least reduced. They also want the number of checkpoints on the road to be reduced, so as to stop harassment by security officials and local government officials.

Finally, it is high time the concept of ‘food self sufficiency’ is finally abandoned for ‘food security’. The former is a policy that has only made food prices expensive. With rising food inflation, Nigerians cannot be said to be enjoying food security. At the end of the day, no one really cares where food comes from. **People just want to eat.**





## ABOUT SBM

SBM Intel is an Africa focused geopolitical research and strategic communications consulting firm focused on addressing the critical need for political, social, economic and market data, and big data analytics. We employ various methods of data collection. Our Data Collection Methodology team advises on data collection methods for all ONS social and business surveys. With clients both within the business and the wider government community, we aim to provide expert advice on data collection procedures and carry out research leading to improvements in survey quality.

Since 2013, we have provided data analytics and strategic communication solutions to clients across various sectors in Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, South Africa, the UK, France and the United States. ■