

VULNERABILITY TO RISING FOOD PRICES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF FARM FAMILIES IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA: THE NON-FOOD COMPENSATION RATIO APPROACH

Agbonlahor*1, M.U; O.F. Ashaolu1; E. Obayelu1; S.A. Sanni2, C. Akinyemi2 and O.O. Oyeniya3

1Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

2Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria

3 Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources

*corresponding author Email : agbonlahormu@unaab.edu.ng

Abstract

The study was carried out to assess the determinants of rural farm families to vulnerability associated with the rising food prices, and the coping strategies adopted to reduce the effect. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 610 households from two purposively selected states in southern Nigeria. Data on food consumption, household structure and characteristics as well as coping strategies adopted were collected using the 24 hour dietary recall protocol and structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The result shows that the mean Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) for a six category food class was 58.34% and the vulnerability index was 0.55. The food consumption pattern reveals that there are low intakes of protein rich food. The frequency of consumption of food items in the pulses and legumes, meat and sea foods categories are low. The Cobb-Dougllass model shows that farm income, dependency ratio, age of the household head, spouse' educational qualification, durable assets structure and value remittances significantly ($p < 0.05$) explained 63% of the households' vulnerabilities to rising food prices. Reduction in immediate expenditure (food and non-food) and cash and kind solicited request assistance from outside family members were popular strategy used by the rural households in coping with food price hike. However, the strategies adopted by the male headed households were different from those adopted by the female heads in coping with the persistent food price increase.

Keyword: vulnerability, food price increase, coping strategies