

## Post Harvest Losses and Food Security in Northeast Nigeria What Are the Key Challenges and Concrete Solutions

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**Abstract :** The challenge of post-harvest losses poses serious threats for food security in Nigeria and the north-eastern part with the country losing about \$9billion annually due to postharvest losses in the sector. Post-harvest loss (PHL) is the quantitative and qualitative loss of food in various post-harvest operations. In Nigeria, post-harvest losses (PHL) have been a major challenge to food security and improved farmer's income. In 2022, the Nigerian government had said over 30 percent of food produced by Nigerian farmers perish during post-harvest. For many in northeast Nigeria, agriculture is the predominant source of livelihood and income. The persistent communal conflicts, flood, decade-old attacks by boko haram and insurgency in this region have disrupted farming activities drastically, with farmlands becoming insecure and inaccessible as communities are forced to abandon ancestral homes, The impact of climate change is also affecting agricultural and fishing activities, leading to shortage of food supplies, acute hunger and loss of livelihood. This has continued to impact negatively on the region and country's food production and availability making it loose billions of US dollars annually in income in this sector. The root cause of postharvest losses among others in crops, livestock and fisheries are lack of modern post-harvest equipment, chemical and lack of technologies used for combating losses. The 2019 Global Hunger Index showed Nigeria's case was progressing from a 'serious to alarming level'. As part of measures to address the problem of post-harvest losses experienced by farmers, the federal government of Nigeria concessioned 17 silos with 6000 metric tonne storage space to private sector to enable farmers to have access to storage facilities. This paper discusses the causes, effects and solutions in handling post-harvest losses and optimize returns on food security in northeast Nigeria.

**Keywords :** farmers, food security, northeast Nigeria, postharvest loss

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