Moroccan Journal of Agricultural Sciences
Vol 6 No 4 (2025): (December 2025), 282-290
Agricultural and Rural Economics

Post-Buharinomics agriculture in Nigeria: What next for policy, practice, and productivity?

Sanusi Mohammed SADIQ	Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, FUD, Dutse, Nigeria
I.P SINGH	Department of Agricultural Economics, SKRAU, Bikaner, India
M.M AHMAD	Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, BUK, Kano, Nigeria
B.S SANI	Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, FUD, Dutse, Nigeria

The Buhari administration (2015–2023) implemented significant reforms in Nigeria's agricultural sector through various policies aimed at reviving local food production, reducing import dependency, and improving rural livelihoods. However, challenges such as insecurity, poor infrastructure, policy inconsistency, and funding bottlenecks stymied optimal productivity. As Nigeria transitions into the post-Buharinomics era, urgent questions arise regarding the direction of agricultural policy and its impact on food security, economic diversification, and sustainable development. This paper synthesizes the recent agricultural experience under Buhari, outlines key challenges, and offers a roadmap for the post-Buhari period.

Keywords: Food security, Growth, Policy, Reforms, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Agriculture has historically played a central role in Nigeria's socioeconomic development. Prior to the oil boom of the 1970s, it was the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, contributing over 60% to the GDP and employing approximately 80% of the population (Iduseri et al., 2024). However, the discovery and overreliance on crude oil revenues precipitated a steady decline in agricultural investment, infrastructure, and productivity. Recognizing this vulnerability, the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari (2015–2023) pursued a range of agricultural revival policies as part of its broader economic diversification agenda, popularly referred to as Buharinomics.

The Buhari administration introduced several major programs to reposition the agricultural sector, notably the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP) aimed at smallholder credit access, the Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI) designed to reduce input costs, and the Green Imperative which sought to mechanize agriculture through a partnership with Brazil (Eborka, 2023; Sodeeq, 2023). These policies were part of a broader shift away from oil dependence, in light of fluctuating global oil prices and the economic recessions of 2016 and 2020 (Ofoma and Adeiza, 2024). Between 2015 and 2023, agriculture received increased federal budgetary allocations and was positioned as the cornerstone of Buhari's poverty reduction and food security plans.

Despite these reforms, Nigeria remains one of the most food-insecure countries globally. According to the Global Hunger Index 2023, the country ranks among the top 10 countries with the highest levels of undernourishment and child wasting. Food inflation consistently exceeded 30% from 2021

to 2023, and the agricultural sector's real GDP growth hovered below 2.5% annually (Nwoko and Briggs, 2025). This paradox of increased policy activity and persistent underperformance has raised critical questions about the efficacy, sustainability, and direction of agricultural development in Nigeria.

Problem statement

While the Buhari-era agricultural programs were widely publicized and praised for ambition, they faced systemic challenges including widespread insecurity (particularly in the North-Central and North-West zones), poor policy implementation, political interference, and limited capacity for monitoring and evaluation (Chukwudozie, 2024; Nwankwo et al., 2024). For instance, the ABP, which disbursed over ₦ 1 trillion in loans, reported loan repayment rates below 40%, largely due to poorly monitored beneficiaries and a lack of credit recovery mechanisms (Sodeeq, 2023).

Moreover, climate variability, farmer-herder conflicts, and post-harvest losses have persisted unabated. These issues, compounded by inconsistent government procurement policies and weak rural infrastructure, have undermined productivity and discouraged private sector participation. As the administration of President Bola Tinubu takes the reins in 2023, the transition into a post-Buharinomics era necessitates an evidence-based review of past agricultural strategies to guide future reforms (Adaja et al., 2024; Okeke et al., 2025).

Justification of the study

The stakes for Nigeria's agricultural sector have never been higher. With a rapidly growing population projected to exceed 400 million by 2050, the pressure on land, water, and food systems will intensify. Agriculture remains a key employer, especially for youth and women in rural areas. Yet, Nigeria continues to import over $10 billion worth of food annually, despite vast arable land and a youthful labor force (Eborka, 2023). The failure to convert policy intentions into tangible results calls for critical reflection.

Furthermore, policy shifts in the post-Buhari era—especially with Tinubu's announced focus on economic liberalization—demand a grounded understanding of what worked, what failed, and why. A review of the Buharinomics agricultural legacy is therefore essential to realign Nigeria's food systems with sustainability, productivity, and resilience.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

• Assess the strengths and weaknesses of agricultural policies implemented under the Buhari administration (2015–2023).

• Analyze agricultural productivity trends during this period.

• Identify institutional and infrastructural barriers to sectoral transformation.

• Propose forward-looking strategies for improving agricultural policy, practice, and productivity in post-Buharinomics Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis of agricultural policy in the post-Buhari era necessitates a nuanced understanding of how political, economic, and institutional forces interact to shape outcomes. This study adopts the Political Economy of Agricultural Policy Framework, with complementary insights from Institutional

Theory and Developmental State Theory, to critically examine the policy dynamics and institutional arrangements influencing agricultural performance in Nigeria.

Political economy of agricultural policy framework

The Political Economy approach recognizes that agricultural policy outcomes are not solely driven by technical efficiency or economic rationality but are deeply embedded in the political and institutional context in which they are conceived and implemented. In developing countries like Nigeria, agricultural policies often reflect elite interests, patronage networks, donor priorities, and geopolitical considerations (Ofoma and Adeiza, 2024; Eborka, 2023).

During Buhari's administration, programs like the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP) and the Green Imperative were lauded for their ambitious scale. However, studies reveal that they were often hijacked by political actors and suffered from weak accountability mechanisms (Sodeeq, 2023). According to Adaja et al. (2024), the disbursement of agricultural credit was frequently influenced by electoral considerations rather than objective economic need or productivity potential. This supports the core claim of political economy theorists that "who gets what, when, and how" in public policy is influenced by power dynamics rather than performance metrics.

Furthermore, agricultural policy under Buharinomics exhibited what scholars call "state capture" by rent-seeking elites, particularly in fertilizer procurement and land access (Chukwudozie, 2024). This explains the discrepancy between large federal allocations and the persistence of rural poverty and food insecurity. The political economy lens helps uncover these hidden asymmetries in resource allocation and policy implementation.

Institutional theory

Institutional theory complements political economy by focusing on how formal rules (laws, policies) and informal norms (social networks, corruption, cultural beliefs) shape actors' behavior within the agricultural sector. Weak institutions can render even the well-designed policies ineffective (Nwankwo et al., 2024). For example, the lack of institutional capacity to track loan repayments under ABP or enforce contracts under the Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI) reflects deeper structural limitations of Nigeria's agricultural bureaucracy.

Institutional theorists argue that policy implementation is often hindered by what is termed «institutional isomorphism», where government agencies mimic donor or foreign models without local adaptation (Nwoko and Briggs, 2025). Nigeria's attempt to replicate Brazil's agricultural mechanization model through the Green Imperative suffered from misalignment with local farming realities, such as land tenure disputes and poor electricity access.

The inability of key institutions—such as the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Bank of Agriculture, and the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation—to coordinate and scale policy outcomes reinforces the view that agricultural transformation requires not only funding but institutional reform (Iduseri et al., 2024).

Developmental state theory

This theory is relevant in examining whether the Nigerian state plays a proactive and strategic role in driving agricultural development. A "developmental state" is one that intervenes decisively in markets, mobilizes capital for strategic sectors, and promotes coordinated industrialization. Countries like South Korea and Malaysia have demonstrated how the state can direct agrarian transformation through targeted investments and technology diffusion.

Under Buhari, there were glimpses of developmental state ambition—such as the emphasis on import substitution and agro-processing clusters. However, Nigeria's state remained more

regulatory than developmental, focusing on subsidies and credit schemes without building strong value chains or export competitiveness (Okeke et al., 2025). The continued dominance of raw commodity exports (e.g., unprocessed cassava or cocoa) suggests a failure to transition from primary agriculture to agribusiness-led industrialization.

A developmental state requires not just political will but technical capacity, coherent long-term planning, and policy insulation from political cycles. These were largely absent in the Buhari administration, as agricultural initiatives were often rebranded or restructured mid-cycle without proper evaluation (Ofoma and Adeiza, 2024; Eborka, 2023).

Summary of theoretical positioning

By integrating these three frameworks—Political Economy, Institutional Theory, and Developmental State Theory—this paper adopts a holistic lens to interrogate Nigeria's agricultural trajectory. It does not treat poor productivity as a technical glitch, but rather as a symptom of deeper governance and institutional weaknesses. This approach enables us to not only evaluate the legacy of Buharinomics but also propose viable paths forward based on structural reforms.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework guiding this study provides a structured lens for understanding the dynamic relationship between agricultural policy, practice, and productivity in Nigeria's post-Buharinomics era. It recognizes that the transformation of agriculture is not a linear outcome of funding or political will but a multidimensional process influenced by governance, institutional quality, resource access, infrastructure, and socio-political stability.

Post-Buharinomics agriculture: A transitional paradigm

Post-Buharinomics agriculture refers to the evolving context of Nigeria's agricultural policy and practice following the exit of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2023. This period is marked by:

• A shift in economic philosophy from state-led intervention to market liberalization under the new administration;

• Continued pressure to achieve food security amid rising inflation and population growth;

• The need to address the legacy failures of past programs like the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (Sodeeq, 2023) and fertilizer subsidies (Nwoko and Briggs, 2025).

In this transitional phase, agriculture is conceptualized as both a developmental imperative and a political economy battleground—a domain where technocratic goals often clash with entrenched interests and institutional bottlenecks (Ofoma and Adeiza, 2024).

Core components of the framework

This framework is built around three interlocking domains: Policy, Practice, and Productivity.

A. Policy: Design and governance

Policies are the formal expressions of state intentions, typically formulated through acts, blueprints (e.g., Agricultural Promotion Policy, 2016–2020), and presidential initiatives. However, policy success is contingent on:

• Coherence: Are the policies aligned with national goals and regional realities?

• Inclusivity: Are diverse stakeholders, such as smallholder farmers, women, and youth, engaged?

• Resilience: Can policies adapt to climate shocks, security crises, and market disruptions?

In Nigeria, policy formulation has often been centralized and top-down, with limited feedback loops or impact evaluations (Chukwudozie, 2024). The lack of a national agricultural data platform has also made evidence-based decision-making difficult (Iduseri et al., 2024).

B. Practice: implementation and stakeholder alignment

This domain explores how policies are translated into action. Even well-designed policies often fail due to:

• Poor inter-agency coordination

• Corruption in input distribution

• Lack of local capacity and extension services (Nwankwo et al., 2024)

For example, while the Buhari administration made significant investments in rice and wheat production; results varied widely across regions due to local implementation gaps, weak farmer cooperatives, and logistics challenges (Eborka, 2023). Moreover, widespread insecurity prevented farmers from accessing farmlands in key food-producing zones such as Benue, Zamfara, and Niger states (Adaja et al., 2024).

C. Productivity: Outcomes and metrics

Productivity is the measurable output resulting from policy and practice. It includes:

• Crop yield per hectare

• Access to local and export markets

• Farmer income levels

• Contribution to GDP

Despite years of intervention, agricultural productivity remains below sub-Saharan Africa's average, with yields for key staples like maize, cassava, and sorghum showing marginal growth (Nwoko and Briggs, 2025). Nigeria still imports over 2 million metric tons of wheat annually, highlighting the weak link between policy efforts and productivity outcomes (Ofoma and Adeiza, 2024).

Conceptual interactions and feedback loops

A key assumption of this framework is that policy, practice, and productivity are mutually reinforcing. Poor productivity undermines political will, which in turn reduces policy innovation. Likewise, weak implementation (practice) discredits future reforms and reduces public trust.

Additionally, external forces like climate change, global commodity prices, and international donor agendas act as exogenous variables influencing all three domains.

To visualize this, the framework adopts a triadic model (Figure 1). This model illustrates how policy intentions must translate into practice through accountable institutions and effective stakeholder engagement to yield tangible productivity outcomes. Conversely, failures in productivity can

provoke public discontent and policy reversals—a cyclical effect observed in the constant restructuring of agricultural programs across administrations (Okeke et al., 2025).

Implications for Post-Buharinomics reform

The conceptual framework suggests that reform in Nigeria's agricultural sector must move beyond policy announcements to address:

• Institutional coordination failures

• Deficient extension and monitoring systems

• Disconnected value chains

It calls for a systemic approach that treats agriculture as an ecosystem—where inputs, land tenure, markets, finance, and infrastructure are integrated in both policy design and implementation architecture.

As Ofoma and Adeiza (2024) argue, the future of Nigerian agriculture depends not just on what policies are made, but how they are implemented and who benefits from them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, using a policy evaluation and document analysis approach to critically examine Nigeria's agricultural development trajectory in the post-Buhari era. The research is exploratory and analytical, aimed at assessing the impact, limitations, and future directions of agricultural policies implemented during 2015–2023, and proposing reforms suitable for the post-Buharinomics period.

A qualitative framework was preferred due to the complex, context-specific, and political nature of agricultural policymaking, which requires in-depth interpretation of policy narratives, implementation dynamics, institutional behavior, and socio-economic outcomes.

Data sources

The study is based on secondary data drawn from the following sources:

• Government policy documents and reports, including:

- Anchor Borrowers' Programme performance reports (CBN)

- Agricultural Promotion Policy (2016–2020)

- National Food Security Updates (2020–2022)

- Budget Implementation Reports from the Ministry of Finance

• Scholarly publications from peer-reviewed journals such as PLOS ONE, FUNAAB Journal of Agricultural Economics, Icheke Journal, and IJIFNSA

• Empirical evaluations and independent audits, especially from international organizations such as the World Bank, IFPRI, and FAO reports on Nigeria

• Recent academic articles (2022–2025) retrieved using advanced scholarly databases, incorporating critical insights on:

- Food security metrics

- Agricultural GDP and yield trends

- Public expenditure tracking

- Farmer displacement due to insecurity

Each source was assessed for relevance, credibility, recency, and data completeness. Preference was given to empirical studies published between 2022 and 2025 to ensure that conclusions are grounded in the most recent post-Buhari transition data.

Data collection technique

The main method used for data collection was desk research and systematic literature review. This involved:

• Retrieving and synthesizing policy evaluation reports

• Compiling statistical datasets (e.g., agricultural GDP, food inflation, input distribution)

• Extracting key themes from qualitative fieldwork reports from Nigerian and international research institutions

Advanced Boolean searches were applied to academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ) using keywords such as “post-Buharinomics agriculture Nigeria,” “Anchor Borrowers Programme evaluation,” “agricultural productivity 2015–2023,” and “food security under Buhari.”

Data analysis procedure

The study employed a thematic content analysis approach. Key steps included:

• Coding of retrieved texts under three overarching themes:

- Policy formulation and governance

- Implementation and stakeholder dynamics

- Productivity outcomes and structural barriers

• Cross-validation of findings by comparing academic perspectives with official performance indicators (e.g., GDP, import/export data, farmer displacement).

• Development of a conceptual synthesis model that links policy, practice, and productivity using grounded insights.

In addition, selected datasets were triangulated with visual trends and outcomes documented in government performance dashboards and FAO datasets to ensure internal validity and analytic generalizability.

Scope and delimitation

The study focuses primarily on agricultural policy performance in Nigeria during the Buhari administration (2015–2023) and proposes reforms relevant for the 2023–2030 period. While international comparisons are occasionally referenced, the research is limited to:

• National-level policies and federally funded agricultural programs;

• Selected metrics of productivity such as crop yield, food inflation, and farmer access to credit;

• Exclusion of niche areas such as aquaculture or livestock insurance programs unless they appear in flagship national plans (e.g., NLTP).

Ethical considerations

This study relies exclusively on public domain secondary sources, such as journal publications, official policy documents, and development agency reports. No human subjects were engaged. Nonetheless, care was taken to:

• Avoid political bias or misinterpretation of sensitive government actions

• Ensure transparent attribution of all referenced data

• Present policy critiques constructively, with solutions-focused analysis

Reliability and validity

To ensure reliability, only peer-reviewed and verifiable data sources were included. For validity, the research design ensured that all arguments are grounded in triangulated data points, not single-source interpretations. The inclusion of recent academic literature (2022–2025) also supports temporal relevance and policy alignment with Nigeria's current socio-political transition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section analyzes the performance of agricultural policy and productivity during the Buhari administration (2015–2023) and examines the implications for Nigeria's post-Buharinomics agricultural transition. The discussion is structured around key thematic findings derived from empirical studies and policy analyses.

Performance of Buhari-Era agricultural policies

Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP)

The ABP, launched in 2015, was one of the flagship initiatives of the Buhari administration designed to enhance credit access for smallholder farmers through the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). While it disbursed over ₦ 1 trillion by 2022, several studies note that its impact on actual productivity was modest and uneven across regions (Sodeeq, 2023; Nwankwo et al., 2024). The loan recovery rate fell below 40% in many states, partly due to poor beneficiary screening, political interference, and natural disasters.

Moreover, Eborka (2023) found that the ABP disproportionately favored politically connected cooperatives, undermining its inclusivity and transparency. Small-scale female farmers, who constitute over 60% of Nigeria's rural labor force, were notably underrepresented in the scheme (Ofoma and Adeiza, 2024).

Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI)

The PFI was initiated to reduce the price of fertilizers and enhance access through a public-private partnership. Fertilizer prices dropped from ₦ 11,000 to ₦ 5,500 per bag between 2017 and 2019 (Nwoko and Briggs, 2025). However, challenges with distribution, quality control, and last-mile delivery meant that many rural farmers either received no fertilizer or received it after the planting season.

Furthermore, reports by Okeke and Anyanwaokoro (2025) indicate that the impact of PFI on yield improvements was statistically insignificant in several regions due to accompanying shortages of agrochemicals and irrigation support.

National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP)

The NLTP, intended to address the protracted farmer-herder conflict and promote ranching, saw limited execution due to political opposition, ethnic sensitivities, and lack of state-level buy-in. According to Adaja et al. (2024), less than 5% of the ₦ 100 billion allocated for the program was utilized before Buhari's exit, and ranching infrastructure was developed in only three of the 36 states.

Sector-wide agricultural productivity trends

GDP contribution and yield levels

Although the agricultural sector's GDP contribution hovered between 23–25% from 2016 to 2022, growth was largely stagnant, with real agricultural GDP growth averaging below 2.5% per annum (Nwankwo et al., 2024). Crop-specific data shows:

• Maize yield rose from 1.7 to 2.2 tons/hectare

• Cassava yield stagnated around 14 tons/hectare

• Rice production increased, but demand outstripped supply, keeping imports high (Eborka, 2023)

This underscores a productivity gap that continued despite large fiscal and credit injections into the sector.

Food inflation and import dependency

Food inflation reached 33.93% in early 2023—its highest level since 2009—according to Nwoko and Briggs (2025). Nigeria continued importing essential food items like wheat, sugar, milk, and processed foods. The failure to reduce food import bills indicates that local production was insufficiently competitive and lacked scale (Chukwudozie, 2024).

In fact, Okeke et al. (2025) argue that Nigeria's food import dependency is more a reflection of broken agricultural value chains and poor agro-processing capacity than of actual land shortages or labor constraints.

Structural and institutional barriers

Insecurity and armed conflicts

Between 2016 and 2023, insecurity became a dominant constraint on agricultural production. Banditry, herder attacks, and insurgency displaced over 3 million farmers, especially in the North-East and North-Central zones (Adaja et al., 2024). A study by Ofoma and Adeiza (2024) links rising food insecurity to the sharp decline in farm access, particularly in key food baskets like Kaduna, Benue, and Zamfara.

Weak extension and monitoring services

Most policies lacked robust extension services and feedback systems. For instance, ABP recipients reported minimal technical support, leading to sub-optimal application of seeds and fertilizers (Sodeeq, 2023). Similarly, the Monitoring and Evaluation (MandE) systems in most agricultural projects were ad hoc and donor-driven, not institutionally embedded (Nwankwo et al., 2024).

Fragmented value chains

The lack of post-harvest infrastructure, cold storage, feeder roads, and processing hubs limited the economic viability of agricultural investments. Nwoko and Briggs (2025) reported that post-harvest losses averaged 35% nationally, with perishable crops like tomatoes suffering up to 50% losses in peak seasons.

Lessons and opportunities in the post-buharinomics era

The cumulative outcome of Buhari's agricultural programs suggests that policy ambition outpaced implementation capacity. The major lessons include:

• Centralization undermines accountability: Programs implemented directly from Abuja often failed to adapt to local realities.

• Monetary policy cannot substitute for structural reform: The heavy reliance on CBN-managed credit schemes created liquidity without productivity.

• Insecurity must be treated as a developmental—not just military—challenge: Agriculture cannot thrive without security.

In the post-Buharinomics era, reforms must emphasize institutional rebuilding, decentralized governance, farmer-led cooperatives, climate-smart agriculture, and private sector incentives to de-risk agribusiness investments (Iduseri et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The agricultural landscape of Nigeria between 2015 and 2023—under the Buhari administration—was shaped by ambitious but unevenly executed reforms. Policies such as the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), the Presidential Fertilizer Initiative (PFI), and the National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) reflected a genuine intention to reposition agriculture as the backbone of national economic diversification. However, empirical evidence consistently reveals a wide gap between policy intentions and outcomes, particularly in relation to food security, productivity, and rural development.

This study finds that while agricultural policies under Buhari were well-branded and financially supported, they were undermined by systemic weaknesses such as weak institutions, fragmented implementation, lack of coordination, limited extension services, and a persistently insecure rural environment. The productivity metrics confirm this misalignment: despite rising public spending, the sector experienced only marginal growth in GDP contribution and continued to rely on food imports for staple commodities like wheat and dairy products.

Importantly, this paper recognizes that the failures of Buharinomics were not necessarily due to poor conceptualization but were largely the result of executional deficits. Centralized decision-making, politicized farmer credit systems, and the absence of robust feedback and monitoring frameworks meant that policies were not grounded in grassroots realities. This disconnect has eroded trust in public agricultural interventions and has discouraged private sector investment in

the sector.

As Nigeria transitions into the post-Buharinomics era under new political leadership, there is both an opportunity and a necessity to reset the trajectory of the agricultural sector. The future of agriculture must be based on evidence-driven, decentralized, inclusive, and resilient systems that empower smallholders, attract youth participation, and link production to functional value chains.

Furthermore, the findings of this paper emphasize that agricultural transformation must be multisectoral, integrating innovations in finance, education, security, infrastructure, and climate adaptation. Nigeria cannot solve food insecurity with subsidies alone; it requires a systemic approach that builds robust institutions, enforces accountability, and aligns policy with long-term national development goals.

In conclusion, post-Buharinomics agriculture offers Nigeria a pivotal chance to learn from past missteps and strategically reposition the sector as a driver of inclusive growth, rural development, and national food sovereignty. However, this will depend heavily on the ability of the government to move beyond rhetoric to results, guided by transparency, collaboration, and strategic investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the insights derived from the assessment of agricultural policy and productivity under the Buhari administration (2015–2023), this section outlines actionable and evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, institutions, and stakeholders in the post-Buharinomics era. These recommendations aim to address systemic challenges while unlocking the potential of agriculture as a driver of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Institutional and Governance Reforms

a. Establish an independent Agricultural Reform and Accountability Commission (ARAC)

To mitigate corruption, improve transparency, and foster evidence-based programming, the federal government should create an independent commission responsible for:

• Evaluating agricultural programs annually

• Auditing government disbursements (e.g., ABP, fertilizer subsidy)

• Publishing agricultural performance scorecards by state

This will address long-standing concerns over political interference and opaque monitoring.

b. Decentralize agricultural policy implementation to states and LGAs

Agricultural interventions should be co-designed and managed at the sub-national level. The one-size-fits-all federal approach used under Buharinomics neglected regional agro-ecological diversity. States should be empowered—financially and legally—to pilot localized solutions for extension services, irrigation, and post-harvest processing.

Security and Resilience Measures

a. Expand the agro-ranger corps nationwide

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps' Agro-Ranger unit, designed to protect farmers and farmlands, should be strengthened and deployed more broadly, particularly in the North-East, North-Central, and North-West zones. Farmers cannot produce if they are displaced or operating

under constant threat.

b. Develop climate-smart agricultural systems

With increasing droughts, floods, and desertification, agricultural practices must be adapted for resilience. The government should fund:

Drought-resistant seed research

Integrated watershed management

Climate risk insurance for smallholder farmers

The study posits that climate variability has a measurable negative impact on agricultural GDP in Nigeria.

Financing and Agribusiness Development

a. Create a national youth agribusiness fund

Youths under 35 represent over 60% of Nigeria's unemployed population. A dedicated ₦ 250 billion fund—disbursed through competitive incubation hubs—should target young innovators, agri-tech startups, and climate-smart farming models. The study emphasizes that youth-driven agribusinesses are more likely to adopt technology and diversify production systems.

b. Incentivize private sector investment in agricultural value chains

Offer tax holidays, credit guarantees, and concessional land access to agribusiness investors who develop rural processing plants or logistics hubs. The study notes that most post-harvest losses stem from poor storage and the absence of rural aggregation centers.

Digital Infrastructure and Innovation

a. Expand digital agricultural platforms

The next phase of agricultural growth in Nigeria should leverage mobile and satellite technologies for:

• Extension messaging

• Real-time weather and price data

• Digitized farmer registration and traceability

Such platforms reduce leakages in subsidy programs and enhance market integration.

b. Strengthen data and monitoring systems

Create an open-access National Agricultural Data Repository (NADR) managed by the National Bureau of Statistics, with real-time inputs from LGAs, cooperatives, and commodity boards. Currently, most agricultural datasets are outdated or donor-funded and not institutionalized.

Human capital and extension services

a. Revive and expand Agricultural Extension Training Institutes (AETIs)

Nigeria's ratio of agricultural extension officers to farmers is among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa. To improve productivity, the government should hire and retrain 10,000 extension officers annually and deploy them with digital tools.

b. Integrate agriculture into basic and secondary school curricula

To rebuild a new generation of agriculturally literate citizens, practical agriculture should be introduced as a compulsory subject at both junior and senior secondary levels, supported by school gardens and agritech clubs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The post-Buharinomics agricultural landscape in Nigeria presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The policy implications of this study are multidimensional, spanning governance, finance, institutional design, and market systems. Drawing on the findings from previous sections, this segment articulates the broader strategic shifts that policymakers must prioritize to ensure a resilient, productive, and inclusive agricultural economy in Nigeria.

Recalibrating the role of the state in agriculture: from direct provider to enabler of markets and innovation

One of the core lessons from the Buhari era is the ineffectiveness of centralized, state-heavy interventions. Programs such as the Anchor Borrowers' Programme and fertilizer subsidies, though well-intentioned, became conduits for inefficiencies and elite capture. Going forward, the federal government must reorient itself from being the main actor in agricultural production to becoming a facilitator of agribusiness ecosystems—supporting innovation, enforcing contracts, and regulating input/output markets.

This implies deeper engagement with Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), especially in agro-processing, rural logistics, irrigation, and extension systems. Such a shift aligns with global best practices, where governments act as market enablers, not crowding out private investment.

Institutional architecture for agricultural governance: decentralization, federalism, and interagency coordination

Agriculture is constitutionally a concurrent responsibility in Nigeria, yet most federal programs under Buharinomics were designed with top-down logic, often bypassing state and local authorities. This created overlap, duplication, and misalignment with local realities.

Policy reform must involve the institutionalization of agriculture-specific federalism. This includes:

• Establishing state-level Agricultural Development Councils (ADCs) with budget autonomy

• Creating joint federal-state investment compacts (similar to the SFTAS model)

• Ensuring state Ministries of Agriculture have standardized KPIs and performance audits (Nwankwo et al., 2024)

These reforms would foster ownership, contextualization, and local accountability, especially in areas like irrigation management, extension services, and rural land governance.

Resilient food systems as a national security priority: integration of agriculture and security policy

The study demonstrates that agricultural productivity cannot be divorced from national security, particularly in regions affected by farmer-herder conflicts, banditry, and displacement. Therefore, agricultural policy must be mainstreamed into national security planning, with targeted interventions such as:

• Agro-security zones protected by specialized forces

• Rehabilitation and reintegration of displaced farming communities

• Incentives for farming in secure but underutilized southern states

This integration will require coordination between the Ministries of Agriculture, Defence, and Interior, and the National Security Adviser.

Data-driven policymaking and monitoring: Institutionalizing Evidence-Based Reform

Many policies under the Buhari administration were implemented without reliable, up-to-date agricultural data—leading to poor targeting and inefficiency. To break this cycle, Nigeria must:

• Institutionalize a National Agricultural Data Repository (NADR) linked to LGAs and state-level statistics bureaus

• Require impact evaluations for every major agricultural program, with open-access publishing

• Develop a digital Agricultural Policy Simulation Lab (AgriSimLab) to model the cost-benefit of interventions before deployment

These reforms would make agricultural policy more predictive, adaptive, and citizen-informed.

Reframing agriculture as a knowledge-intensive sector: Education, Agritech, and Human Capital Development

Post-Buharinomics policy must recognize that agriculture is no longer a purely labor-intensive sector but one that increasingly relies on data, climate science, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology. This requires:

• Massive investment in curriculum reform for agricultural universities and colleges

• Funding for agricultural innovation clusters and agritech incubators

• Establishing national and regional Agro-Innovation Parks, linked to digital extension systems

Such a paradigm shift will attract youth participation and boost productivity.

Regional and continental trade integration: Positioning Nigeria in AfCFTA and global value chains

Nigeria must align its post-Buharinomics agricultural policy with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), by:

• Harmonizing sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards

• Supporting export-oriented clusters in cocoa, cashew, sesame, ginger, and yam

• Building capacity for agricultural export documentation and traceability

These efforts will unlock regional and global markets, reduce smuggling, and increase Nigeria's competitiveness in value-added agriculture.

REFERENCES

Abbas A., Iduseri E., Otitoju M., Ebukiba E., Olutumise A., Agbonika D., Adole S. (2024). Nigeria's petro-dollar economy, agricultural programmes and policies: a review. Journal of Agricultural Science and Environment, 24: 1-15.

Adaja O.V., Olugbeko O.S., Olajide O.E. (2024). Farmers-herders conflicts and government's economic diversification initiatives in Nigeria. African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues, 27(2).

Chukwudozie A.M. (2024). The change agenda of Muhammed Buhari administration and socioeconomic development in Nigeria 2015-2023. International Journal of Business and Management Research, 5: 341-365.

Eborka N.F. (2023). Agriculture and Food Security in Buhari's Administration 2015–2022. Icheke Journal of the Faculty of Humanities, 20: 293-304.

Nwoko K., Briggs A.C. (2025). Agricultural Development and Food Security in Nigeria, 2015–2023. International Journal of Innovative Food, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture, 13: 69-84.

Ofoma C.V., Adeiza U.S. (2024). Interrogating the effectiveness of poverty alleviation measures in Nigeria under President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration (2015-2023). Journal of Public Administration, Public Affairs, and Management, 22: 223-223.

Okeke C.B., Anyanwaokoro M., Anideobu G.A. (2025). Evaluation of impact of agricultural financing on Nigeria's agricultural sector performance from 1999 to 2023. African Banking and Finance Review Journal, 20: 50-72.

Sodeeq M.A. (2023). Economic performance of former President Muhammad Buhari (2015-2023): a thematic review. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7: 1192-1199.

References