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ENUGU: Farmers Lament Incessant Attack By Herdsmen

By Lawrence Njoku (Enugu) on January 30, 2016 3:12 am

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Cattle strolling aimlessly on Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway yesterday
PHOTO: LAWRENCE NJOKU

OVER the years, activities of the herdsmen have increased in almost every part of the country. Enugu State is not exempted as every part of the state has continued to witness it regularly.

The herdsmen are easily found on the highways, bushes and farms as they move about in search of pasture. Over time, these herdsmen have had issues with the farmers and residents while trying to fend for their cattle. They have been accused of deliberately moving their cattle into the farms to feed and destroy crops.

Many a times, attempt by farmers to stop further damage on their crops by the cattle have resulted in conflicts which led to loss of human lives and property

especially in border communities of the state.

Only recently, the state was agog with the death of a woman in his farm at Uzo-uwani Council, following wounds she sustained from the attack by the suspected herdsmen.

The report had it that she had visited her farm the previous day and discovered to her chagrin that the cattle had moved into her farm and eaten her crops. She was said to have raised the alarm which attracted other nearby farmers. They were said to have assisted her in driving away the cattle after reprimanding the herdsmen.

The next day however, she had returned to her farm unaware that her action the previous day did not go down well with the herdsmen.

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Without any exchange of words, the herdsmen, who to Top id to be three in number and hiding at a distance, swooped on her. They were said to have given her the beating of her life, while she died few minutes after she was brought to the hospital.

Such was also the case in Udi, where a man and his wife were attacked for allegedly querying some herdsmen who had allowed their cattle into their farmland. The cattle was said to be feeding on their crops when husband and wife arrived the farm.

When they inquired, what they got was the beating of their life. The men were said to have used knife, sticks and other available objects to attack them, which led to their being rushed to the hospital where they were treated and discharged after two weeks.

Speaking on the menace of the herdsmen as well as the misunderstandings among their hosts that had always resulted in casualties, a member of the Cow dealers Association in the State, Mallam Sagi Muhammed, advocated the ban on certain age being allowed to control cattle in the communities.

He said: "These small boys are the ones creating the trouble and allowing their cattle easy access to people's farms. They don't know how to regulate the cows; they can't even stop them when they want to cause havoc. That is the situation and you know, they come back to give false report that could trigger off issues with anybody that tried to stop them."


Also speaking, Chief John Onah called for the licensing of the herdsmen by their host communities, stressing that it would check infiltration by those coming to cause trouble.

He said that means of identification and record have become necessary since the government has failed in providing grazing sites for the herdsmen.

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